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THE ORIGIN OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH

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BY

M. MONCALM

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH

BY

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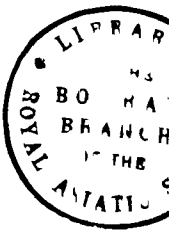

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"Language is the autobiography of the human mind."
The Science of Thought (MAX MÜLLER)

"Language is our Rubicon which no brute will dare to cross."
The Science of Language (MAX MÜLLER)

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WITH the approval of the Author's representative, the translator has at times followed the exact words of Max Müller rather than the literal translation, where the latter has differed slightly from the former.

The thanks of the translator are due to friends who have kindly revised the MS. and a portion of the proof sheets.

THE books used by the Author in this work are :—

MAX MÜLLER.

Introduction to the Science of Religion.
Origin and Growth of Religion.
Chips from a German Workshop.
The Science of Language.
The Science of Thought.
Natural Religion.
Physical Religion.
Anthropological Religion.
Theosophy, or Psychological Religion.

CH. DARWIN.

Origin of Species.
The Descent of Man.
Expression of the Emotions.

L. NOIRÉ.

Der Ursprung der Sprache.
Die Lehre Kants, und der Ursprung der Vernunft.

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THE ORIGIN OF THOUGHT AND SPEECH

INTRODUCTION

WHEN opening my eyes in the morning, and whilst still struggling with an inclination to sleep, I review the day and what it will have in store for me; but the pictures drawn are confused, and my will takes no part in it.

For some time I have been haunted by the impression that the mental faculties of the generality of men have not succeeded in throwing off a species of torpor resembling that of a person hardly awake; the supposition that this torpid condition prevents our minds from attaining that degree of lucidity to which they have a right to aspire, is perhaps a hallucination, yet possibly I may be right in thinking it.

How many confused ideas traverse my brain in one day, and how seldom those come of which I follow the thread. We know well that injunction so often given by parents to children, and by schoolmasters to their pupils: "Try to concentrate your attention." It almost seems as if that which we require of children is beyond my powers, for I have hardly resolved to disentangle a problem of whatever kind, when, under the form of useless, futile, inept thoughts, obstacles heap themselves across my path. I conclude from this that a fatal somnolence paralyses my faculties.

When a person has to be awakened who is disinclined

to be disturbed, he is violently shaken. What movement would suffice to energise a man whose mental powers were drowsy? I do not see anything from the outside; and a personal effort could not be looked for, from an enervated will.

And yet I am possessed by the desire to penetrate the mystery of my existence; I ask myself what I am, and why I am on this earth; from the moment that I put this question to myself I feel that the awakening may be possible for me. I know two classes of men who never ask it; first those who do not see that there is any problem to solve; and secondly those who are content with infantine and superficial teaching; or more or less elaborate and learned, but coming from one who appears to himself to be the depository of a collection of supernaturally inspired truths. I own that I do not belong to the first of these divisions, since I shall have no rest as long as I am ignorant of what passes in me and around me; neither do I belong to the second of these classes, since those who compose it are content to believe; but faith is not knowledge, and I am anxious to comprehend what has been discovered, known, and established by evidence. But how shall I submit to this labour of research, when the habitual condition of my thoughts is to wander at will amongst my impressions, and when I am so incurably absent-minded?

We live in an atmosphere of many and varied ideas; ideas true and false, good and bad; they pulsate in the air we breathe; they are like the winged antheral seeds which are lifted up by the slightest breeze of autumn and carried afar; they are little heeded; but should it happen that these seeds attached themselves to our garments we should notice how strikingly the one form varied from the other.

Amongst those ideas which wander at large is this aphorism—that we are ignorant of that of which we know

not the commencement, or in other words of that which we do not examine from the practical point of view; he who wishes to learn how something is made, whatever it may be, must know how to begin it. This truth has so ancient a date that we cannot conceive of a time when it was absent from the mind of man; only it had the common lot of all truths with which we are so familiar that apparently there is nothing to learn from them, and this aphorism appears at first sight to be the ramblings which we hear but to which we do not listen.

To me it is of value, as it strengthens my conviction that the mist which obscures my vision will not be dissipated until I have traced certain problems to their source; I know by experience that few phenomena are easy of explanation when their appearances only are examined at any given moment; and close questioning fails to elicit light, whilst ignorance prevails concerning their beginning.

How does it happen that in spite of such unfavourable circumstances, often with no clear purpose, and with eyes half shut, humanity can advance? For the progress is indubitable. The public conscience has developed; and its actions make themselves felt; civilised nations have become more humane; they understand better than they did formerly that peace is more profitable than war; certain social problems are being seriously discussed, and some are on the point of solution. In the physical sciences, as well as in mechanical arts, progress is most marked. But I see that though imagination, observation, and a talent for invention have had much to do with this progress, the capacity of imitation has also been a powerful factor. When William Herschel gave up music for astronomy, he perfected the optical instruments which were in use at that time, and manufactured some excellent telescopes at comparatively moderate prices, with the result that his fellow astronomers and their successors

were able to devote themselves to the study of the heavens with greater ease and readiness; and the discovery of Uranus was soon followed by that of a large number of celestial bodies. Again, at one of the National Exhibitions of our time, there was shown to all comers the model of a recently invented apparatus for the conveyance of the wounded on battlefields; since which, each country now produces its own design with various improvements, and the victims of the barbarism, still lingering in war, were benefited by these modern appliances, due entirely to the art of imitation.

In short, progress exists, but not all along the line. As thought travels slowly in its own domain, so mental science is behindhand. A true idea is not mechanically reproduced, it must be tended for it to bear fruit, but what tendance would avail, if it is only with difficulty that we discriminate between what we know already, and what we do not yet know, for this distinction must accompany conscious progress.

Everything around us tends to keep us in this penumbra, which is so favourable to inertia, ignorance, sleep. Certain groups of philosophical ideas become condensed and systematised; in some systems there are one or two great thoughts only. This suffices—these systems remain, germinate and direct contemporaneous generations as well as those of the future. It may also happen that these same ideas invade brains little prepared to receive them, and thus deviate from their course, err as they advance, and end by becoming so travestied that it is no longer possible to know what they were at their origin—a swerving movement has taken place, which causes suffering to contemporaries, and, still more, to those who come after. Thus the bulk increases, the bulk of truth and the bulk of error; and this fatal expansion of the true and the false, intertwined the one with the other pursues its encroaching and troublous way.

This confusion is something impersonal; it is an opaque body which interposes itself between the truth and ourselves, and prevents us from contemplating it; but the confusion may also arise directly from those whose mission it is to guide us. I open a book written by some grave thinker who, I imagine, knows his subject thoroughly, and I begin to read in all confidence; at first I think I understand him; then I am stopped by a word, and I wonder what meaning the author has attached to it; a little further I come upon the same word, which now seems invested with another signification; this disconcerts me, and I close the book. I take another, but the same disagreeable surprise awaits me, and I find everywhere terms whose meaning varies to suit the convenience of the author; and what we are to understand by these words is nowhere explained. These defects arise probably from the fact that certain philosophers, taking their confused opinions for new ideas, seek for words in which to express them, and not finding them in their vocabulary, they coin them, using terms to which no precise meaning is attached; which terms remain more or less enigmatical to the authors themselves, and, consequently, unintelligible to the readers; in this way does the confusion of ideas arise and is propagated. A philosopher, I think it was Haman, made the following very true and very alarming statement: "Language is not only the basis of our power of thought, but also the point from which our misunderstandings and errors spring"; and Hobbes also says: "It is obvious that truth and falsehood dwell only with those living creatures who have the use of speech."

But all that I have just said indicates merely a superficial portion of my passing impressions; in going below the surface I find in the past other causes for our present perturbation of mind. For centuries we have frequented schools in order to learn to distinguish truth from error, yet it is always a mixture of truth and error that we are

taught. What result had we attained on the eve of the twentieth century? We are still asking ourselves whether science does or does not harmonise with religion. After that we cannot but give ourselves up to the deepest despondency, we cannot but fold our arms in despair and question whether we shall ever see things clearly.

Amongst our ancestors there were sometimes found men of great resolution who, in order to punish themselves for cowardice and luxury, administered discipline to themselves; the idea is not so extravagant as it appears to some people. A few good strokes of the whip might result in reviving or strengthening the will, and in forcing it to resist the moral supineness which is so apt to increase; but physical discipline is no longer in use amongst us, and in my own case I have substituted an illustration of which I try never to lose sight. I picture to myself an ideal potter, whose whole ambition would be to make good vessels, and, having succeeded in making some of great solidity, he would choose out those of the finest shape for the market. He attains success, and his thoughts being occupied with his pottery only, at last he makes vases of absolute perfection. With what feelings of envy I contemplate this creature of my imagination, who is to serve as my model, and yet whom the want of concentration of thought prevents me from imitating.

It would have been perhaps prudent on my part to follow the example of this workman, and to accustom myself to reflect on subjects less immeasurably above me than those which have such a powerful attraction for me; but I yield to the impulse—once given. I often lose myself when pondering on the world where destiny has placed me; and I ask myself—How did life first appear on the earth? Was there nothing but a cellule from whence all that fills space came? Was there one cellule for the vegetables and another for the animals? If man did not spring from the cradle of all things that live and grow on

the surface of the globe, was he an individual of his own species at the beginning, or two individuals, or many? After what fashion did man speak at his first appearance? What were his thoughts? "How can it be explained," I asked myself again, "that of all the members of the animal kingdom, one only should have marvelled at and pondered on his position with regard to the universe and himself? That one only should have manifested the desire to understand his role in life, whilst all the creatures that surrounded him, lived contentedly in blissful ignorance? It would be impossible to conceive of a horse, an elephant, or a mammoth disquieting itself concerning its origin and the end of its being; why has man only sought a solution of these problems?" The learned scholars who occupy themselves with these questions are far from agreeing unanimously concerning them; thus I—I, who am only one link in the interminable chain of units which composes humanity, past, present and future; I, in my own individuality must live and die in my ignorance. I revolt against this prospect, which I yet recognise as inevitable; I refuse to acknowledge myself beaten, and I feel myself irresistibly driven to seek for more knowledge; then feeling unable to supply the lack, I cease to be anxious, and fall asleep again.

Sometimes when led to investigate the inner tribunal, conscience, I contemplate a phenomenon purely intellectual and moral, which the uproar raised by the conflict of so many heterogeneous ideas cannot make me forget, although it does not intrude itself upon me with violence; on the contrary, it waits with an unparalleled patience and discretion at my door. It is the phenomenon named religion.

We read in the Bible that Moses, having noticed a burning bush that yet was not consumed, went up to it, the more closely to investigate this marvel. For many people religion has borne the same aspect that the burning

bush did for Moses, and those, like Moses, have approached it in the endeavour to discover what it could be. Religion has always compelled attention, its metaphysical side has been described in voluminous theological and philosophical treatises; historians on their side have made many researches concerning the forms in which it has clothed itself on earth during a long succession of centuries, and amongst many peoples; it is even said there are learned men who have studied all the Bibles and catechisms; and it is added that few amongst them know what religion really is. It does not on that account play a less important part in our existence; it is from religion that all those acts of devotion and charity spring, to which millions of human creatures give themselves. There are few who ask themselves whence comes this breath which inspires them so fully, and since when has its influence extended itself amongst us; to be nourished with its fruits sufficed. Such is the disposition of soul of the majority of those for whom religion is more than a name—whatsoever it be—pronounced in an unknown tongue. Would it not be natural to desire to make its acquaintance more closely? Apparently not; we accept it as something known by intuition, without concerning ourselves with its aspect.

This strange fact I have also noticed. When studying history very attentively, and with an attitude of mind free from all prejudice, it is possible to fix the exact period at which errors, more or less generally acknowledged as such, have first crept into the world; but I have vainly sought in history for the corresponding moment when truths first made their appearance; truths, which have been accepted, if only by a few isolated individuals, or by certain groups of individuals, of whatever race, or of whatever period of the life of humanity they might be. But as it is acknowledged that amongst the errors which trouble us, we possess some truths, it is evident that they

have manifested themselves ; but when and how ? At this I do not arrive.

This silence of history indicates, I think, that the truths of which we seek the commencement have been revealed to man in prehistoric days. I do not feel that I know positively concerning the first human beings who appeared on the earth ; I picture them like soft wax ready to receive a definite form from the hand which created them. These first comers who knew nothing, never having had any training, and possessing only their five senses to aid them in arriving at knowledge, were infinitely better placed than I am to embrace truth, since I should have to disentangle myself from a vast mass of ideas which disfigure the natural simplicity of my soul ; I should have to forget, even the truths which I believed myself to possess, and to transform myself into white plastic blank wax, with no impress whatsoever, and to wait until my Creator traced the image He wished ; this is now not possible. I should not be now here if I could have been contemporaneous with my ancestors, and I had been permitted to follow in the steps of their pilgrimage, this would have pleased me well.

I perceive my friends are uneasy—"Take care," they say, "an *Idée fixe* is dangerous."

But is it quite certain that an *Idée fixe* is always harmful ? Have they never seen a man wandering in a forest without any fixed determination to quit it ? Is it credible that our first parents had no fixed idea of discovering the import towards themselves, of the vast world in which they had been placed, knowing nothing of the reason of their position ? Equally ignorant of the reason why the sun, the moon, fire, hurricanes, storms, thunder, rivers, mountains existed, always above and around them. The whole of nature itself required to be interrogated. In what way could this settled determination have harmed them ? It is true that they are all

dead, but determination did not kill them. And their *Idée fixe* must have been very tenacious and powerful for this thirst for knowledge to have descended with their blood into our own veins; their wish to gain information is reproduced in us; this is the legacy that our fathers have left us, and the singular feature of the legacy is that unlike others, of which the parts are subdivided and diminished, this in its entirety has passed down to each of the milliards and milliards of inheritors.

Must we then feel that we are destined to ask perpetually, and to receive no answer? That need not be. Many things that our ancestors could not fathom are clear to us; what was unknown to them is known to us. That which prevents us from following up this line of progress through these phases is that each reply brings forth anew fresh questions, and thus it will be to the end —if the end should ever arrive. This last question we do not put to ourselves, which is an indication that we are not careful to arrive at the answer. When I compare the present state of our knowledge, and of our condition of mind, to which I have given the epithets of torpor and inertia—and they are rightly given—to that which held sway in the dark ages when the earth rested on an elephant, the elephant on a tortoise, and the tortoise swam in the void, I must acknowledge that we now see things more truly.

But to start from the point of the sum of our acquired knowledge in this march of progress would be fatal to us; the ground we have won will only retain its solidity in proportion as we keep in sight the path we have trodden, with all its encountered and vanquished obstacles, and that will only be by pursuing the same path again in company with our ancestors.

Here my friends interpose—"That would be a vain task, you cannot picture humanity in its infancy, that is an impossibility."

Doubtless, and since I am too practical to attempt the impossible, abstaining from every superhuman effort, and submitting my imagination to a strict discipline, I will again consult history, but not history as I know it, nor that history which is written in our days, polished, cautious, honestly critical, that which notes the old traces of humanity when they occur on the route mixed with events, and which treats the eternal truths as though they had no existence, and, truly, they do not belong to its dominion. I would study the other history, which at first was related, not written, because speech came before writing. I should try to collect information from the ancient literatures of the people concerning the manner in which our ancestors depicted divinity to themselves, especially with regard to dealings with mortals at the time when visits between the celestial inhabitants and those on earth were common. . . . We possess the Old Testament of the Hebrews, the sacred books of the Hindoos, and the mythology of the Aryan family; the mine is rich, so rich that I should have time to die a thousand times before I should have finished the task of searching in this mixed medley of historical remains, fantastic recitals, sublime thoughts, and flagrant falsehoods. Happily this work of digging in the past in quest of an idea is not the work of one man nor of one epoch, but that of many men and many epochs, and it never ceases.

Moreover, a short time ago no one imagined that documents very much more ancient than those I have just named, would have been discovered in hitherto unexplored regions of the physical and mental world. Two enterprising men, Darwin and Max Müller, visited and studied them. Darwin sought to explain what the origin of organic beings might have been, and in what way they passed through a series of evolutions, from one form to another of great dissimilarity. He who

speaks of evolution implies researches into the beginnings of things; this was exactly what I needed. All the world knows Darwin's name, even those who abstain from dealing with scientific problems; he has some ardent admirers who are not careful to define very accurately what it is they admire in him, and some furious adversaries, who, judging mainly by hearsay, have formed a conception of him which is either very superficial or very false.

The development of human reason has been one of the objects of Max Müller's researches. This great thinker, who is at the same time the first philologist of our time, has sought in the science of Language for the origin of thinking man. Very few amongst the men of the world, who are nothing more than men of the world, know what the name of Max Müller represents, even the existence of a science of Language is unknown to them.

Even if Darwin and Max Müller have not been absolutely the first to strive to go back, the one to the origin of the organic world, the other to the dawn of human speech, no others have yet walked in this darkness so courageously and so perseveringly as these two men.

Not only have the journeys of exploration been much multiplied of late, but a principle of action has been extracted from beneath the scaffolding used in the building up of new theories; which is, "If you have an idea, and you wish to see whither it may lead, take it from its first commencement, and advance confidently." This is what I am about to do.

I am undertaking a long journey; I carry with me but few plans; turning my eyes away from whatever might attract my curiosity either on the right hand or the left, I shall still more carefully guard myself from being dazzled by the mirages which I am told are frequent in those countries; or frightened by the phantoms which it is possible I may meet on the road. I shall always remind myself that one hour of feebleness, indecision, hesitation

might cause me to lose my equilibrium, and that it would only require one moment of dizziness to cause my retrogression to the elephant and the tortoise. God forbid! It is to the opposite pole to which I shall direct myself; if truth exist, reason is here to find it.

CHAPTER I

HYPOTHESES

THINKERS of all times have asked themselves the question whence does this world come on which we live. Curious to know whether the universe was self-made, or was the work of a great primal ancestor, or personal Creator; philosophers who considered the matter in its entirety have left us two hypotheses.

"According to one, chaos reigned at the beginning, or in other words, the possibility of everything; and from the midst of this chaos certain realities were evolved,"[1] from an inherent aptitude for development; this aptitude has been named in many ways, such as "natural selection," "survival of the fittest." The Greek sages were already acquainted with the thought implied in these terms. Empedocles said that the fittest would always preponderate, since conservation is an integral part of their nature; whilst what is unfit, or not in accord with the surroundings, must disappear. But the partisans of this theory find themselves confronted by a serious difficulty: if a blind force has produced the universe, whence comes the order which reigns in nature? It is freely acknowledged, even by those with small powers of observation, that the inhabitants of the terrestrial globe are divided into animal and vegetable, which are again subdivided into distinct classes, separated by distinct lines of demarcation. If we admitted that the vegetable and animal kingdoms were not at first so entirely separated as they are at present, there would always remain a question

[1] Max Muller, *Science of Thought*, p. 98.

awaiting reply: How is it to be accounted for, that two families issuing from the same source, become so separated, and have remained distinct ever since?

Amongst the propagators of the second hypothesis, some admit the existence of a primordial germ possessing the power of infinite production; others believe in a Personal Creator who formed all things, whether by the means of pre-existent material or from nothing. In accepting this theory of a reasonable Being we must at once lay aside that of pure chance, since to Him is attributed the permanence of the separation described above, this separation or division is of such a nature as to induce the impression that thus it is by premeditation and co-ordination. Certain philosophers putting aside the question of the origin of the organic world in its entirety, have restricted their field of investigation, and taken it in detail. Thus: What is the origin of man? How is it that man thinks and speaks? What is human thought and human speech? Is it man's nature that compels him to speak, or has language been from the first a matter of convention? The Greeks whilst pursuing their researches amongst the lofty regions of metaphysics expressed some very subtle theories on this subject, coupled with vast systems which comprehended the whole of humanity. By these they weighed the words spoken, their derivation, the ideas which these words represented, and the primitive source of the various phenomena exhibited by man, for the ancients recognised man's indivisibility.

Haraclitus considered that each object combines in itself a thought and its expression, emanating from the object, and that man is the recipient only; that he breathes a spiritual atmosphere; thus it is that every name necessarily designates the object it denotes.

Plato said that all the objects of the external world have in them something which constitutes their essence, and that this essence is capable of being transmitted from

objects themselves into the human mind; that ideas constitute the essence of objects, and that words are therefore necessarily related to the constituent parts of the objects, and their impression on the human understanding.

Epicurus said that human language is the result of the pressure exercised by the external world on the sensitive essential matter in man, and that as soon as man sustains this pressure he emits words spontaneously; the most ancient words used seem to have been expressive sounds, and with the human race it was as natural for them to talk as to groan, to cough, or to sneeze.

Thus the Ancients did not distinguish speech from conception.

The problem of the origin of speech, treated in antiquity with as much depth as calmness, profoundly agitated the minds in the Middle Ages, and the theologians naturally introduced this variant in their exposition of the subject: Has language a divine or human origin? The Christian philosopher replies: "The intellect of God created the world, and the human soul, made in the likeness of the mind of God, has in itself the source of all knowledge: thought and language are of divine origin; left to himself, with only the help of his own powers, man would never have found a means of expressing his thoughts." Such was the belief of the greatest thinkers of the Middle Ages; and they accepted the fact of a primordial language which men must have received directly from the Creator; this opinion was perpetuated until the most recent times. But from the earliest Christian centuries there were certain philosophers such as Gregory of Nyssa, who, whilst acknowledging the existence of a primitive universal language, considered that it redounded more to the glory of the Almighty Creator to endow man simply with the power of speech, and they deny that this language with its grammar and orthography was divinely revealed.

The materials for the study of these questions are lack-

ing. The only document in our possession on the origin of mankind—the Old Testament—was carefully consulted; there we read that God created man after His image, that He made him of the dust of the earth, that He breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, so that man became a living creature. The Bible narrative is one of simple facts, and it was necessary to look upon them as so many facts, for any effort to pierce beneath the surface of these mysterious words was like groping in the dark. Another recital was also given in Genesis. God brought all the animals of the earth, and the birds of the air to Adam that he might name them, and whatsoever Adam called every living thing that was the name of it. This seemed difficult to interpret, and renewed the questions under other forms. Did man at the beginning resemble a newly born babe who cries but cannot speak? In this case how did he begin to express his thoughts? If man was created an adult, but did not receive a complete language from heaven, how did he acquire the faculty of speech, this faculty which we know to be the distinguishing mark of humanity, and which is missing in other creatures?

The eighteenth century decided that this way of treating a scientific question left much to be desired; it resulted in a *cul de sac*, and a fresh beginning had to be made. Some philosophers, thinking to simplify matters, affirmed that primitive man, tired of wandering through woods like other animals, decided to group themselves into companies; the members of this society, feeling the necessity of making themselves mutually understood, expressed themselves at first by the aid of signs and gestures, then by sounds peculiar to the things denoted, afterwards, in one way or another, actual words were pronounced. This reasoning was used in the eighteenth century, and not knowing where to find better, those who employed it felt satisfied with their perspicacity; language which was formerly considered as a gift direct from God,

became a physiological endowment, a conventional art; this century had an intense horror of the supernatural, so that it readily accepted any system in which God did not appear.

The lack of reflection shown in the building up of these hypotheses concerning the commencement of humanity has been severely criticised, and that they were very superficial must be conceded. It is equally clear that all these tentative efforts had this in common, that they were the results of the influence on immature minds of the period, of the necessity of explaining the awakening of human reason in a rational manner.

The search was continued. At last the nineteenth century considered that a solution had been found. Certain ideas which had received attention during divers periods were now collected, sorted, re-examined more closely, and classified, and from these labours there arose the two theories of interjection and imitation. According to the first, language consists of sounds drawn involuntarily from man by his emotions and feelings; by degrees man became accustomed to reproduce similar exclamations when wishing to express the same feelings, and these exclamations would serve as the roots of words; this is the interjectional theory. The imitative or onomatopœic proceeds from another source; when man was confronted by all the objects of the exterior world he began to imitate the sounds emitted, such as the cries of various animals, the whistling of the wind, the fall of a stone; the many sounds which fill the air were reproduced by the human voice and formed the basis for future words. Objections to both of these theories are not lacking. If emotions such as joy, pain, anger, love, disgust—or if physical sensations such as result from the sting of a bee or from a blow of the fist, could furnish the roots of a language, and if it were the same with the imitation of noises produced by nature, the sounds of the words should retain a definite impress of these emotions and feelings, and

should reproduce, if only approximately, these various noises. Even if we admit that a small number of primitive men set themselves to imitate the murmur of the stream, the rolling of the thunder, the barking of a dog, the groans of the wounded, the only result would have been infinite variations of clamour quite impossible to distinguish or to understand. Strictly speaking, the prolonged sound of "*bée*" and "*mou*" might awaken the conception of a goat and cow in the mind; but in order to convey the idea of a herd of oxen it would be necessary to avoid equally the sound of "*bée*" and "*mou*," as belonging exclusively to the two special animals. The warbling notes of birds have always attracted attention, and essays have been made to reproduce them by imitative harmony, but the various peoples have given various interpretations,[1] and in the generality of cases there is no resemblance between the names of animals and their cries.[2] After examining the testimony of the name "cuckoo" (no doubt convincing taken by itself), which is the prominent argument brought forward by the advocates of the imitative theory called by Max Müller the bow-wow theory, we are not able to advance further in that direction. Darwin in his book, *The Descent of Man*, promulgates the idea that language may have originated from interjections and imitations, but elsewhere in the *Expressions of the Emotions* he hastens to add with his accustomed frankness: "But the whole subject of the differences of the sounds produced under different

[1] Thus Max Müller says: "In Chinese the number of imitative sounds is very considerable. . . . We give a few, together with the corresponding sounds in Mandshu. The difference between the two will show how differently the same sounds strike different ears, and how differently they are rendered into articulate language:

The cock crows = *kiuo kiuo* in Chinese
= *dchor dchor* in Mandshu."

—Max Müller, *Science of Language*, vol. i. note p. 419.

[2] Max Muller says again: "We listen in vain for any similarity between goose and cackling, hen and clucking, duck and quacking."—Max Muller, *Science of Language*, vol. i., p. 410.

states of the mind is so obscure that I have succeeded in throwing hardly any light on it; and the remarks which I have made have but little significance."[1]

Scholars and literary men have taxed the resources of all the treasures of their imagination in endeavouring to picture the beginnings of language; in the present day many efforts are made by learned men to discover, from nurses surrounded by their charges, how the first words were reproduced by primitive man. It would be as useful to study the nature of primitive rocks amongst a mass of bricks and mortar, since the chasm is wide between the thoughts which our little ones have when they first begin to speak and those which primitive man had in trying to name his surroundings. We who speak because we know point out father or mother to a little child, naming them at the same time—"this is mother," "this is father;" by degrees attributes become connected in the child's mind with these names; such as mother's hair, or her dress; or father's beard, his pin; and whilst naming them we again point them out; and when the child pronounces these words in its own fashion, that is incorrectly, is this defect in pronunciation to be a sign-post to us—pointing out the direction to be followed in judging of primitive language? At a later period the child distinguishes between the mother's smile and the father's voice; later still its mind comprehends all the moral and physical attributes covered by these two terms; and thus with all other objects—"here is the cow," and "here is the piece of sugar," which so soon become familiar to the child, with their cognate words, milk and sweetness. Our children thus learn to speak under very different conditions from those in which our first ancestors found themselves, when with no previous experience they tried to put forth their first words.

Conjectures increased and developed into systems,

[1] Darwin's *Expression of the Emotions*, p. 93.

which, however, contained nothing beyond germs of fresh conjectures and fresh systems, of which none rested on a reasonable basis.

At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was quite natural that there should be uncertainty as to the path to be followed in seeking the beginning of human speech. Was it necessary to trace all the known languages to their source? Would not the same feeling of confusion arise when attacking all the dialects spoken on the surface of the earth as oppressed those who were at the base of the Tower of Babel? An idea which was universally adopted rather tended to check the progress of this study: it sprang from the theory that humanity had received the gift of speech from the Creator; and as the Jewish people alone were thought to be the recipients of a supernatural revelation, it followed that Hebrew must be the earliest language, and consequently that all existing languages were derived from the Hebrew. It is hardly possible to conceive the number of works put forth by the learned to remove any doubt with regard to this strange affiliation; the difficulty was to support or prove the supposition that Hebrew had given birth to Greek, Latin, and the rest; this Biblical language was tortured and twisted about in the endeavour to prove the descent of the others from it, but no satisfactory result was obtained. It was by the advice of Leibniz that as many facts as possible were collected concerning the modern languages then in use. He asked for the assistance of monarchs, European princes, ambassadors, missionaries, and travellers. It was during these investigations that the attention of certain philologists was directed to Sanscrit, a language which had been dead 300 years before the Christian era, and about which the learned in Europe had troubled themselves very little.

At the time of Plato and Aristotle a vague notion was current in Greece that India, as well as Egypt, was the

birthplace of matchless learning, only it was not known in what this learning consisted, and even the name of the Vedas (the most ancient collection of sacred writings of the Hindoos) was unknown to the philosophers. The first Christian writers who mentioned the religions of India, and who knew up to a certain point how to distinguish Brahminism from Buddhism, never quoted the Vedas; this name is first used by some Chinese converts to Buddhism, at the beginning of the Christian era, who had undertaken a pilgrimage to India, considered by them as a holy land. In the sixteenth century Francis Xavier went there as a missionary, but without knowing Sanscrit; in the seventeenth century Roberto de Nobili, another missionary, acquired the language, and caused a compilation to be made of Hindoo and Christian doctrines. It was not well done; the French translation was sent to Voltaire, who praised it and spoke of it as the most precious gift for which the West had ever been indebted to the East. The Père Calmette, who had heard of the importance of the Vedas, was the first European to obtain authentic fragments, but these attracted little attention in Europe. In the early part of the nineteenth century some members of the Asiatic Society residing in Calcutta discovered a collection of Sanscrit MSS., amongst them some portions of the laws of Manu, two epic poems, the Râmayana and the Mahâbhârata, some philosophical treatises, works on astronomy and medicine, plays and fables. These works possessed great interest for those scholars who were occupied with the study of humanity, such as Herder, Schlegel, Goethe, and Humboldt. For the most part the preconceived ideas with which these literary men received them tended to diminish the benefit to be derived from them to a great extent, as they endeavoured—consistently with the spirit of the time—to establish the identity of thought running through the sacred literature of the Hindoos and the Bible. They also sought to point out the supposed connec-

tion between the historical recitals of the Old Testament, the Indian legends, and the Greek and Latin mythologies. Certain MSS. containing passages from the sacred code of the Hindoos having been translated by Anquetil Duperron, Schopenhauer drew from it the foundations of his own philosophical belief; nothing less than the genius of this German scholar would have sufficed for the presentation of the sublime truths which the original contained, by means of this very defective translation. One of the first historiographers of Buddhism was the Abbé Barthelemy Saint-Hilaire, but yet his labours have not served to raise the veil hiding the true meaning of the Brahman writings, for without the knowledge of the early Sanscrit, it was not possible to seize the inner meaning of a literature which the sages of India had required fifteen centuries to complete. Thus it was that Europe only knew the more accessible portions, and those better calculated to strike the imagination, but not necessarily the most important. "Much had been said and written about Buddhism, enough to show the Roman Catholic clergy that the Llamas of Thibet had anticipated them in the use of auricular confession, the rosary, and the tonsure; and to disconcert philosophers by showing them that they were outdone in positivism and nihilism by the inmates of Chinese monasteries."[1]

The strangeness of this religion attracted public attention, which was especially directed towards certain blemishes, which had crept into it during a decadent period, and tarnished its original purity, and although learned men continued to devote themselves to a study more and more deeply penetrated with the Sanscrit language, they were yet so unprepared for the results which must inevitably follow this study, that certain German universities became the scenes of veritable scandals, when some of the learned declared that they

[1] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 190.

had found a community of origin between the people of Athens, of Rome, and of India, and the stupefaction of the philologists knew no bounds when, in 1833, Bopp's work appeared, *The Comparative Grammar of the Greek, Latin, Gothic, Sanscrit, Zend, Lithuanian, Slavonic, and German Languages*, whilst the effect on the younger students was quite bewildering.

But that which created the greatest furore in all Europe was the promulgation of the scientific discoveries of Eugène Burnouf, Professor of Oriental Languages in the Collège de France. Long centuries had passed during which no original Sanscrit document had come to light, and now in the short space of ten years three complete collections of Oriental literature were known, the sacred books of the Brahmans, of the Buddhists, and of the Magians. "The critical examination and restitution of the Zend texts, the outlines of a Zend grammar, the translation and philological anatomy of considerable portions of the Zoroastrian writings were the work of the learned young French scholar."[1]

A few proper names and certain titles were up to this time all that could be deciphered of the cuneiform inscriptions on the walls of Persian palaces. Classical or oriental scholars had hitherto only seen in them a quaint conglomeration of nails, wedges, or arrows; but when at last the meaning was disentangled, it suddenly flashed upon the discoverers that there was a close relationship between languages hitherto held to be quite distinct. Facts, at first only suspected, now received full confirmation; those previously unknown were discovered and claimed, if only provisionally, in the name of Science. Historians and philologists pressed eagerly into this new path. In looking back they could see that the human family was divided into three distinct groups, the Semetic family, the Aryan family—sometimes called the Indo-

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 82.

Germanic—and the Turanian class, the northern division of which has the name Ural-Altaic given to it occasionally. I use the word *class* advisedly, as the characteristic traits hardly merit the rank of family. They also discovered that human speech had equally marked divisions, making three groups or families, corresponding to the three great human races. The Semetic family produced the Hebrew of the Old Testament, the Arabic of the Koran, and the ancient language graven on the monuments of Phœnicia and Carthage, of Babylon and Assyria; the Greek and Latin, Persian and Sanscrit, the Germanic languages, Celtic and Slavonic, all belong to the Aryan family; from the Ural-Altaic group come the Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic, Samoyedic and Finnic; there still remains the Chinese language, which is monosyllabic and stands by itself, the only remnant of the earliest formation of human speech.

These discoveries caused a complete change in the methods adopted by philologists; at the present time the ancient systems of the classification of tongues are entirely abandoned. The comparative philologist ignores altogether geographical locality, the varying ages of languages, and their classical or illiterate character. Languages are now classified genealogically, according to their real relationship; and Hebrew, coming down from its pedestal, took its natural place amongst the languages of the Semetic family.[1]

I revert here for a moment to the past in order to quote a page from Plato, which shows us the small esteem in which the purely speculative method, in the treatment of philosophy, was held by one of the profoundest minds of antiquity:—

"Dost thou see that very tall plane-tree?" said Phædros to Socrates.

[1] Max Muller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 21.

"Certainly, I do."

"Tell me, Socrates, is it not from the foot of this plane-tree that they say Boreas carried away Oreithyia from the Ilissos?"

"So they say."

"But tell me, O Socrates, dost thou believe this mythe to be true?"

"Well, if I did not believe it, like the wise people, I should not be so very far wrong; and I might set up an ingenious theory and say that a gust of Boreas, the north wind, carried her down from the rocks in the neighbourhood, and that having died in this manner, she was reported to have been carried off by Boreas from thence. As for myself, Phædros, I think these explanations, on the whole, very pleasant; a man is, after all, not much to be envied, if it were only for this, that when he has set right this one fable, he is bound to do the same for a second, then a third, and thus much time is lost. I, at least, have no leisure to spare for these things, and the reason, my friend, is this, that I cannot yet, according to the Delphic line, know myself; and it seems to me ridiculous that a man who does not yet know this, should trouble himself about what does not concern him. Therefore I leave these things alone, and, believing what other people believe about them, I meditate, as I said just now, not on them, but on myself—whether I be a monster more complicated and more savage than Typhon, or a tamer and simpler creature, enjoying by nature a blessed and modest lot."[1]

"Thus, to the mind of Socrates, man was pre-eminently the individual . . . he is ever seeking to solve the mystery of human nature by brooding over his own mind, by watching the secret workings of the soul, by analysing the organs of knowledge, and by trying to determine its proper limits; and thus the last result of his philosophy

[1] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 1.

was that he knew but one thing, and this was, that he knew nothing."[1]

More than 2300 years have elapsed since the intercourse between Socrates and his disciple took place. But the problems which we of the twentieth century have not yet succeeded in solving, have so entirely absorbed our attention, that it seldom occurs to us to measure the distance which separates us from the commencement of philosophical studies. Although the scientific equipment of our forefathers occupies a small portion of our thoughts in our leisure moments, we yet discover—in comparison with ourselves—how very indigent they were.

This earth was unintelligible to the Greeks, they looked upon it as a solitary being, without a peer in the whole universe; to us it is a planet; one of many, all governed by the same laws, all moving round the same centre. It is the same with man who also remained a riddle to the ancients. An intelligent study of the world's history, which they knew but imperfectly, has enriched our language with a word which never passed the lips of Socrates, Plato or Aristotle — humanity. Where the Greeks saw barbarians, that is, human beings other than themselves—we see brethren; those whom they called heroes and demi-gods are our ancestors; those who appeared to them strangers, united by no ties, are to us one family in work and suffering, divided by language and severed by national enmity, but pressing forward step by step almost unconsciously towards the fulfilment of that inscrutable purpose for which the world was created. As we have ceased to see in nature the working of demons or the manifestation of an evil principle, so we deny in history an atomistic conglomerate of chances, or the despotic rule of a mute fate; we turn over the leaves of the past seeking for a hidden train of thought in the actions of the human race; we understand that every effect has its cause;

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 5.

that connecting links run through the moral world, as well as the physical world; that there is nothing irrational in either history or nature, and we believe that the human mind is called upon to discover in both the manifestations of a Divine Power, the source of our existence.[1]

This result, however, we could not have attained without first recognising the fact that man is no isolated being, complete in himself; that if he is to be effectively studied he cannot be disassociated from his family, all the members of which are governed by the same laws, all move round the same centre, and all receive their light from the same focal point. He is one of a class, of one genus or kind, whom it would be impossible to estimate correctly, if we set aside his relations to his fellows.

"To understand man," an illustrious naturalist has said recently, "it is not sufficient *not* to separate him from those whom he resembles in every point; it is quite as necessary to study him in connection with those closely related to him, the inferior animals."

Hitherto I have not mentioned a hypothesis which has been promulgated in our days on the origin of man, which would have been considered the most remarkable this century had seen, had it not appeared simultaneously with another treatment of a like subject equally noticeable for its profundity in another direction.

During a voyage which he made in South America, Darwin had been struck by the very close affinity which existed between the living and the fossil species of this continent; this link between the past and present appeared to him to throw considerable light on the obscurity which enveloped the question of the origin of species. The degree in which organs were capable of modification was especially to be taken into account; the study of the variation of animals and plants under domestication led Darwin to the path he followed; the

[1] Max Müller, partly from *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 6.

uninterrupted reproduction of characteristics in the structure of organic beings, intensified rather than attenuated by a succession of modifications, caused him to see in all living creatures, not independent entities, the one apart from the other, but descendants from common ancestors now extinct.

Evolution, like many another theory, may be dangerous if not thoroughly grasped, and if it lead to a denial of the permanence of the well marked lines of demarcation in nature. Evolution, according to Darwin, starts from beginnings which are quite distinct; and leads on to well defined ends; thus Darwin does not acknowledge only one common progenitor for all the great natural races, but many, and nothing more clearly demonstrates his transparent sincerity in scientific matters than what his critics are pleased to call his inconsistencies.

At the end of many years of persistent labour, Darwin published his book on the *Origin of Species*.

I do not propose to give a summary of it. The author does not adopt the method of a learned writer expounding his system; his attitude is that of a naturalist who, during his excursions, examines nature in its innumerable and most minute details; when two facts, both of which he considers true, appear to contradict each other, he notes both equally, since he is too sincere to conceal that one from the public which apparently invalidates his theory. Moreover at each step he avows that this theory is not yet entirely free from the fog which invariably envelops each new idea at its birth. An explorer such as he is, who has succeeded in explaining so many mysteries, might very naturally become elated, but it is not so with him; his thoughts never seem directed towards himself; with all his genius, self does not appear to exist with him; the only things that are prominent—with a distinct existence —are the phenomena which he studies.

The notion that all organic beings have been such as we

now see them from the beginning, was almost inevitable, as long as the theory was held that the formation of the world was of comparatively recent date; and those who, without further investigation, held the traditional belief of the independent and individual creation of each species, could only offer one explanation, if all animals—all plants—are as they are it is because it has pleased the Creator to make them so. Because the Darwinian theory has cast a doubt on the successive creation of living things, it has been said that Darwin's views were inimical to religion. These impressions are transitory—as were those expressed by Leibniz when he reproached Newton with introducing "occult qualities and miracles into philosophy;"[1] and when he attacked his law of gravitation "as subversive of natural, and inferentially of revealed religion."[1]

After explaining in what manner nature had produced all the variations of plants and inferior animals from a small number of germs, Darwin did not feel himself under the necessity of adding one more to the germs in order that what was afterwards termed humanity might appear on the scene; the principle of evolution as already applied to the organic world, would suffice to explain all difficulties; the natural forces all engaged in the same movement, would spread and branch out in various directions, until they reached the culminating point of incorporation with the human creature.

Darwin's book, the *Descent of Man*, contains the genealogical table of this higher animal which the author so often compares with the lower animals. If both have so much in common, such as the chemical composition of their bodies—their germinal vesicles—their laws of growth and reproduction; it is—so he conceives—that both have come from the same ancestor; moreover, all helps to prove that man has received from his prototype amongst the

[1] Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 6th Edition, p. 396.

mammifers, all the special characteristics of its own organs. Thus it is easy to understand that in the eyes of many naturalists the embryonic structure is of more importance for an accurate classification than that of an adult, since the embryo is that condition in which the animal has undergone the least modification, thus it better represents the original form of the primitive progenitor.

For a species of one of the inferior animals to have attained the level of man, it was necessary that, following an universal law, it must have undergone variations both corporally and mentally, during a long succession of generations; the primary causes of these variations is not clearly understood, but it has been proved that the conditions of life or environment to which the living beings submitted were potent agents in the renewal of phenomena. Like all other creatures man increased out of all proportion to his means of subsistence, and thus began the struggle for existence, when those who were best equipped for the fight survived in the greatest numbers, and left the greatest number of robust descendants. Man acquired the capability of expressing his wants by means of language, at first, perhaps, little different from that of the inferior animals, but the continued use of language reacting on the brain furnished a means for the further development of those mental faculties which of themselves constitute a real distinction between man and beast. This difference, however, does not become pronounced until a certain period of man's existence, as during the earliest stages the intelligence of the newly created human beings does not differ from that of other mammifers. It begins to dawn a little later, then gradually increases, and at last becomes most strongly marked, even if a comparison be made between the intelligence of a highly developed monkey and that of the lowest savage, who has failed perhaps to find words with which to express the most elementary emotions. But men are not all on the same

level; without speaking of the vast difference that exists between the faculties of a Papuan and those which we know to have been possessed by a Newton or a Kant, we notice a very sensible difference between the mental powers of two individuals of the same race; but we always find these extremes are connected by shades of difference which gradually melt imperceptibly the one into the other. Darwin arrives at the conclusion that the distinctions to be drawn between the intellect of man and the intelligence of animals is one of degree rather than of kind.

Darwin shares the opinion of those who consider the moral consciousness in man as that which distinguishes him specially from the inferior animals, and he conceives its origin to be found in the social instincts whose most important constituent parts are family ties and the emotions to which they give rise. This consciousness makes man capable of approving of certain acts and disapproving of others. After having been overcome by a temporary passion, he reflects and compares the already weakened motives causing him to act as he did, with the appeal made to him by his family and social instincts, and he resolves to act differently in the future; the opinion of his neighbours influences him, but it is not so much the opinion of the community in general as that of his own small circle to which he belongs.

Social instincts are found also amongst a large number of inferior animals, but with them, this mutual sympathy does not extend to all the species of their class, as with man it reaches only to the members of their own small community.

With the progress of civilisation and in proportion as the smaller communities become larger, so man's reason leads him to extend his sympathy to all the men of his nationality; arrived at this point, there remains a very impalpable barrier between that and the inclusion of men

of all races in feelings of universal benevolence; but if these races are separated from his by strong dissimilarities in external appearance and in habits of life, it would take much time for him to learn and recognise in them the constituent parts of humanity similar to himself.

The moral consciousness which raises man to a level not attained by beasts, leads him to conceive and apprehend the precept, "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you." The sympathy which extends beyond the limits of humanity, such as compassion for animals, seems the last quality to be developed. The moral sense in man has its counterpart in animals of the inferior order; under the influence of man the animal becomes more capable of improvement by the increased exercise of his intelligence, by habits, by instincts of heredity, so as to have transformed the prototype of the wolf and jackal to that of a dog.

There is nothing to lead us to suppose that primitive man had felt the existence of a principle higher than nature. There is much to indicate that what we mean by religious feeling was not known to him; but the aspect of the question undergoes a change if by religious sentiment we understand belief in invisible spirits, for this belief was universal. This is natural; as soon as certain faculties of the imagination awoke in man, such as astonishment, curiosity, he would seek to understand all that passed around him; his first idea would be that all the phenomena in nature would proceed from the presence inherent in them of a power compelling to action in the same way as man feels himself obliged to act. This belief in the course of age would easily tend towards fetishism, then to polytheism and finally to monotheism; it would simultaneously inculcate many strange superstitions, of which some produced terrible effects, such as the sacrifice of human lives to a powerful being eager for human blood, since savages readily attribute to these superior powers the

desire for vengeance as well as all the other evil passions they themselves possess.

Amongst civilised peoples the conception of an all-knowing, an all-seeing God, exercises a powerful influence on morality; man learns little by little, no longer to regard the praise or blame of society as his sole guide; this external guidance is replaced by personal inward convictions which come from his reason and which is conscience. Religious devotion is a very complex human sentiment; it is composed of love, submission, gratitude, hope, and perhaps of other elements; no creature is in a position to experience so complicated an emotion whose intellectual faculties have not attained a level of medium development. Yet something approaching this may be seen in the depth of affection manifested by a dog for his master, which is a combination of complete submission, of fear, dependence, and perhaps also of other qualities.

Learned writers have for some time agreed in looking upon language as the barrier separating man from animals; all books on logic state the fact. But this special characteristic of the human race attracted Darwin's attention in a very small degree. "Man, however, at first, uses, in common with the lower animals, inarticulate cries to express his meaning, aided by gestures and the movements of the muscles of the face."[1] "Certain animals," he says, "do not lack the physical conditions necessary for articulate language, since there is not a letter in the alphabet that a parrot cannot pronounce." Darwin goes even beyond this. "It is not the mere power of articulation that distinguishes man from other animals, but it is his large power of connecting definite sounds with definite ideas."[1]

It would be difficult to be more explicit, and it must be owned that this was a great concession on Darwin's part; but afterwards, and perhaps with the object of weakening

[1] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, 1871, vol. i. p. 54.

the force of this statement, he adds: "The fact of the higher apes not using their vocal organs for speech, no doubt depends on their intelligence not having been sufficiently advanced."[1] However, no effort of thought, in the present state of our knowledge, would cause us to understand how any number of thousands of centuries passed in roaring and barking could enable wolves and dogs to join a single definite idea to a single definite sound; and if we said that, by the help of specially favourable environments some unknown species of primitive animal had acquired the power of speech, and had succeeded in imparting the knowledge to its descendants, and in thus elevating them to the level of human beings, we should only be relating fantastic tales, which would have no connection with scientific research.

Darwin does not allow himself to be affected by this consideration. "In a series of forms graduating insensibly from some ape-like creature to man as he now exists, it would be impossible to fix on any definite point where the term 'man' ought to be used."[2] It is evident that if the gradations were imperceptible, there would be no possibility of marking the precise point where the animal ended and man began; "the admission of this insensible gradation would eliminate, not only the difference between ape and man, but likewise between black and white, hot and cold, a high and a low note in music; in fact, it would do away with the possibility of all exact and definite knowledge, by removing those wonderful lines and laws of nature which . . . enable us to count, to tell, and to know."[3]

I will now bring together some passages which are scattered in various parts of the *Origin of Species* and the *Descent of Man* which have especially attracted criticism.

[1] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 59.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 235.
[3] Max Müller's *Science of Thought*, pp. 166, 167.

"It is interesting to note that all that we are, all that we see, has been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance, which is almost implied by reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse; a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a Struggle for Life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, directly follows."[1]

And again: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one."[1] "Man may be excused for feeling some pride at having risen, though not through his own exertions, to the very summit of the organic scale; and the fact of his having thus risen, instead of having been aboriginally placed there, may give him hopes for a still higher destiny in the distant future."[2] "In the future I see open fields for far more important researches. Psychology will be securely based on newly laid down foundations; that of the necessary acquirement of each mental power and capacity by gradation. Much light will be thrown on the origin of man and his history."[3]

Again elsewhere: "The moral sense or conscience, as Mackintosh remarks, has a rightful supremacy over every other principle of human action. It is summed up in that short but imperious word *ought*," and Darwin proceeds to quote Kant's apostrophe as follows: "Duty! wondrous thought, that workest neither by fond insinuation, flattery,

[1] Darwin's *Origin of Species*, p. 403.
[2] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 405.
[3] Darwin's *Origin of Species*, p. 402.

nor by any threat, but merely by holding up thy naked law in the soul, and so extorting for thyself always reverence, if not always obedience; before whom all appetites are dumb, however secretly they rebel. Duty! whence thy original?"[1]

Darwin continues: "This great question, 'Whence thy origin?' has been discussed by many writers of consummate ability; and my sole excuse for touching on it is . . . that, as far as I know, no one has approached it exclusively from the side of natural history."[2]

"But as the feelings of love and sympathy and the power of self-command become strengthened by habit, and as the power of reasoning becomes clearer, so that man can appreciate the justice of the judgments of his fellow-men, he will feel himself impelled, independently of any pleasure or pain felt at the moment, to risk his life for his fellow-creature, or to sacrifice himself for any great cause. He may then say, I am the supreme judge of my own conduct, and, in the words of Kant, I will not in my own person violate the dignity of humanity."[3]

The warmest admirers of Darwin wish that he had expressed himself more definitely. Some amongst them are astonished to find the word "*Creator*" in certain editions of the *Origin of Species*, and not in all; others have drawn attention to the fact that Darwin could say in all good faith, "I see no good reason why the views given in this volume should shock the religious feelings of any one."[4] Darwin's line of thought has perhaps not been perfectly grasped, and his commentators have been numerous. This, however, is certain. From the moment when the author of the *Descent of Man* considered that he had discovered in social instincts the first germ of the idea of

[1] Quoted by Darwin in *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 70.
[2] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 71.
[3] *Ibid.*, vol. i. p. 86.
[4] Darwin's *Origin of Species*, p. 396.

duty, it becomes a matter for surprise that he yielded to the desire of referring to Kant and of quoting his apostrophe to Duty. But it is quite evident that Darwin did not see in the universe only the fortuitous result of a combination of matter; he admitted the existence of a law acting from the beginning and continuing to act. In order the better to grasp his thought, it is necessary to be in a position to define his terms. He speaks of natural selection, but in ordinary parlance selection presupposes the existence of distinction and judgment; and to distinguish and choose, intelligence is necessary; and if the essential nature is intelligent, what is this nature?

The endeavour to prove that man has descended from a creature not originally man has deeply stirred our generation, and the greater number amongst us only yielded to a natural repugnance in repulsing the idea with indignation. However, because this inward feeling tells us that a proposition is false, it does not necessarily follow that it is so; in looking at it more closely, we have to admit that many humiliating facts are accepted by us without demur. We are not scandalised at the notion of being composed of the same chemical elements as the inferior animals, nor do we revolt against the injustice of the circumstances and restraints imposed upon all by the facts of birth and death; but this unreasoning submission has no more rational basis than the revolt of our feelings, in presence of the assumption, that an animal only was our ancestor. The notion that animals so dissimilar as the monkey, the elephant, the bird, fish, and man could have proceeded from the same parentage seems too monstrous to be true; from the scientific point of view this feeling is of no value; in the face of all the assertions of our moral convictions science, as such, remains immovable; the only weapon admitted in a scientific encounter is fact opposed to fact, argument to argument.

Moreover, any appeals which can be made to our pride, our dignity, our piety, would be equally wide of the mark, so long as proof is lacking that man possesses something which has no existence in lower animals either actually or potentially.

It is a matter for regret to have to acknowledge the fact that the union of a profound knowledge, combined with true sincerity in research, is insufficient to endow the world with a well established truth. The world is too hasty in accepting or rejecting a new system before giving itself the trouble to divide the system into two parts, one of which can be placed at once amongst evident truths, whilst the other must be subjected to minute investigation and close testing. Precisely after this manner does Darwin's work lend itself to a division into two parts, the former is the history of the formation and gradual development of the organic world, represented by plants and animals, including man (*The Origin of Species*), but it is also the history of the formation and gradual development of man considered as a being composed of body and spirit (*Descent of Man*). In the author's mind this portion of the subject is closely connected with the former.

At first sight it would appear that a tribunal, which was quick to distinguish truth from error in this teaching, had not been found. Certainly scientific materialism has no voice in the matter, since its mission is only to deal with material and actual facts; and when from the facts accumulated conclusions are deduced as applied to origins, this would be out of its sphere, and the conclusions reached can only be arbitrary; thus Darwin's theory not being found free from the taint of idealism, it was condemned without trial. Religious dogmatism did not show itself any more capable of deciding the question, for this dogmatism, whose domain is faith, considered that due reference was not made to Divine intervention, and

concluded that the theory was only judged by the light of science, and thus condemned it unheard. But all condemnation, which cannot prove itself to be just, has no scientific value, only one tribunal is competent of judging and solving the question, and that is the science of language, it alone possesses documentary evidence. The exact point at which the animal ceases and man begins can be determined with precision since it coincides with the beginning of the "Radical Period" of language, and language is reason.

CHAPTER II

OUR ARYAN ANCESTORS

SOME of the studies undertaken and carried on in a tentative groping fashion, with the purpose of ascertaining the nature of that complex being man, have been placed before you. I have mentioned the more or less fantastic suppositions set forth on the subject, and I have dwelt rather more fully on a recent system, of which the fundamental portion (a magnificent scientific monument, to which experimental tests have given a solid basis) is followed by a second part which treats especially of the descent of man. The time has now come to examine the studies of a school of philosophy, which, guided by a new theory, searches in the past, and passes under review all previous conceptions, suppositions, or even misconceptions of the previous schools.

The science of language, based on the close connection between thought and speech, only dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first problem presented to it is that of origin—the origin of thought and speech in man—which two united in their essential parts, make man what he is. The means by which this science works is called comparative philology; it is by the analysis of languages—living as well as dead—that it seeks to discover the infancy of human thought. It is evident that in order to penetrate thus deeply, this analysis must follow the whole progress of speech since it first sounded; to no other school of philosophy had this idea occurred; all others ignored the fact that previous to the commencement of human language, no vestige of

humanity could exist; therefore, probably, another fact had been ignored; that the only archives in which it is possible to study the history of humanity and the development of reason are those of language.

Wherever sacred writings exist, we find in them the most ancient languages of the people who possess them; this is the case in Persia, China, Palestine, Arabia, and India; thus it is in these writings which are looked upon as being divinely inspired, that search must be made for the genesis of the successive thought of these peoples.

But these ancient writings differ widely the one from the other; for the most part they contain ideas which are the product of various ages; often also, as in Greece, and Rome and Persia, we find ourselves confronted by thoughts or theories which had already arrived at a high degree of development, or are beginning to lose their first clearness. Only amongst the Hindoos is it possible to follow step by step the growth of the conception, and the transformation of the names which clothe them. The Vedas show us more clearly than any other literary monument in the world, the uninterrupted course of the evolution of language and thought from the first word pronounced by our ancestors to our own most recent reflection.

India does not possess remains of ancient temples nor of ancient palaces. Edifices of this kind were probably unknown before the invasion of Alexander. The Hindoos have always felt themselves strangers in the land, and the constant efforts of the kings of Egypt and of Babylon to perpetuate their names during thousands of years, by means of bricks and blocks of stone, did not occur to them until suggested by foreigners. But on the other hand, from the most remote times, they have possessed sacred writings, and they still preserve them in their ancient form. The number of separate works in Sanscrit of which the manuscripts are still in existence is now estimated at more than ten thousand. What would Plato and Aristotle have

said, had they been told that there existed in that India which Alexander had just discovered—if not conquered—an ancient literature, far richer than anything they possessed at that time in Greece, and dating back so far that the old Sanscrit which clothed the religious and philosophical thought of these early inhabitants was a dead language. This literature has not ceased to increase, and contains the canonical books of the three principal religions of the ancient world; the Zend-Avesta, the sacred books of the Magians, written in Zend, the ancient Persian; the Tripitaka, the sacred books of the Buddhists, which contain moral treatises, dogmatic philosophy, and metaphysics; and the sacred writings of the Brahmans called the Vedas.

It would be difficult to say whether the Old Testament, or certain portions of the Vedas, have existed for the greater number of centuries; it is certain that the Aryan race had no existence previous to the Vedas. The name *Veda* signifies "knowing, or knowledge"; veda, Greek οἶδα, is a verb with the same meaning in Sanscrit as in Greek, "I know." The book of the Vedas contains an epitome of the most ancient Brahmanic science, and is composed of four collections of hymns; that which is called Rig-Veda (hymns of praise) is the true Veda, and the other Vedas are to the Rig-Veda what the Talmud is to the Bible. The Rig-Veda, which for more than three thousand years had laid the foundations of the moral and religious life of innumerable millions of human creatures had never been published until Max Müller put forth a complete edition, accompanied by authorised commentaries on Indian theology.

The composition of these hymns occupied many centuries, and in 600 B.C. the collection seems to have been complete. Some early treatises on these hymns tell us that at this date the theological schools had accomplished a great undertaking, that of counting every verse, every word, every syllable of the hymns; the number of syllables is

432,000, the number of words 153,826, and the number of verses as computed in these treatises varies from 10,402 to 10,622. Until the introduction of writing, the Vedic hymns were entirely preserved by memory, with such accuracy and fidelity that the rules contained in the treatise for the repetitions correspond with great exactness with the actual text, its accents, metre, and the divinity it praises. The Rig-Veda now forms the foundation of all philological and mythological studies, as well as those connected with the science and growth of religion; without it we should never have obtained any insight into the belief of our ancestors.

We will now transport ourselves to the cradle of the Aryas "Noble," according to some writers situated on the Asiatic continent, according to others more to the north, between the Baltic and the Caspian seas. This will suffice for the first stage; I shall make few demands on history, or on grammar.

There was a time when the great mass of the Aryan people was hesitating on the eve of abandoning their early habitations, previous to a dispersion in two directions. This people was composed of two branches, the tribes of the north, and those of the south; the former went towards the north-west of Asia and Europe; here they established themselves, and the great historical nations—historical, since most of them have played noted parts amongst the nations — the Celts, Grecians, Romans, Germans and Slavs were their descendants. Endowed with every aptitude for an active life, they fostered these capabilities to the highest degree; society was founded by them, morals brought to a greater perfection, the foundation of science and art established, and the principles of philosophy laid down. Although constantly in conflict with the Semitic and Turanian races, these Aryans became in their descendants the masters of the world. Whilst the

northern division followed a north-westerly direction, the southern went to the mountains lying to the north of India; crossing the passes of the Himalayas, and following the long watercourses, they descended into the vast fertile valleys, and from that time India became as their own land. These pleasant dwelling-places of the Aryan colonists, protected on the one side by high mountains, and on the other by the ocean from all foreign invasions, were not disturbed by any of the ancient conquerors of the world; around them kingdoms rose and fell, dynasties were created and became extinct, but the inner life of the tribes remained undisturbed by these events. The ancient Hindoos were calm, contemplative dreamers, a nation of philosophers, who could only conceive of disputes in themselves, in their own thoughts; the transcendental nature of the atmosphere in which his ideas worked, and in which the Hindoo lived, could not fail to retard the development of practical, social, and political virtues, and the appreciation of the beautiful and useful. The Hindoo saw nothing in the past but the mystery of the Creation, in the future but the mystery of his destiny; the present offered nothing to him that could awaken physical activity, and apparently had no reality for him; no people ever existed who believed more firmly in a future life, or who occupied themselves less with this one; such as they were in the beginning, such they remained. The only sphere in which the Indian mind moves freely is the sphere of religion and that of philosophy. In no other part of the world have metaphysical ideas taken such deep root as in India; the forms in which these ideas were clothed, in epochs of varying culture, and in the midst of divers classes of society, were alternately those of the grossest superstition and of the most exalted spiritualism.

It has been asserted that in these two Aryan branches must we look for our ancestors. How shall we verify the truth of this assertion? What family likeness must we

seek in order to recognise the relationship? How feel certain that the languages we speak have been derived from them? "If we knew nothing of the existence of Latin —if no historical documents existed to tell us of the Roman empire—a mere comparison of the six Romance dialects would enable us to say that at some time there must have been a language from which all these modern dialects derived their origin in common."[1]

Let us conjugate the verb *to be* in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, French, Walachian, and in Rhætian, and we shall see that it is clear: first, that all are but varieties of one common type: secondly, that it is impossible to consider any one of these six dialects as the original from which the others had been borrowed, since no single one contains the elements composing them. "If we find such forms as *j'ai aimé*, we can explain them by a mere reference to the grammatical materials which French has still at its command, and the same may be said of *j'aimerai*, i.e. *je-aimer-ai*, I have to love, I shall love. But a change from *je suis* to *tu es* is inexplicable by the light of French grammar; it must have been a part of some language antecedent to any of the Romance dialects; it is, in fact, the verb *to be* in Latin, which solves this difficulty; each of the six paradigms is but a metamorphosis of the Latin."[2]

It was known that the roots were the same in all the Aryan languages, that the same grammatical changes were common in many of the words in everyday use, such as father, mother, heaven, sun, moon, horse, and cow, as well as in the principal numbers; but it was the study of Sanscrit in its primitive form which first led the learned to the discovery of the reason of the vowel changes in certain words in use in our day, and which changes the English word *to wit*, to know, into *I wot*, I know, and the

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, vol. ii. p. 19.

German *ich weise* into *wir wissen*; these changes are the result of a general law, the application of which can nowhere be more clearly appreciated than in the Vedic Sanscrit, and which was unknown until this language was studied in the Veda. (I will here note that Sanscrit not being the original from which the other Aryan dialects have their being, but an elder brother, when Max Müller makes use of a Sanscrit phrase he does it to give an idea of the process through which the language has passed which he considers preceded Sanscrit.)

There is another list of paradigms which, under a less familiar aspect than the first, presents the same phenomenon. Conjugate the verb *to be* in Doric, Latin, old Slav, Sanscrit, Celtic, Lithuanian, Zend, Gothic, and Armenian, and you will see that the nine are varieties of one common type, and that it is impossible to consider any one of them as the original of the others, since, here again, none of the languages possess the grammatical material out of which these forms could have been framed. Sanscrit cannot have been the source from which the rest were derived, since Greek, in several instances, has retained a more organic form than the Sanscrit. Nor can Greek be considered as the earliest language from which the others were derived, for not even Latin could be called the daughter of Greek, since Latin has preserved certain forms more primitive than the Greek. Hence all these nine dialects point to some more ancient language, which was to them what Latin was to the Romance dialects; only at that early period there was no literature to preserve to us any remnant of that mother-tongue that died in giving birth to all the modern Aryan dialects.[1]

There is one fact to be noted. If a comparison be made of the verb *to be* in these dialects, it will be seen that Sanscrit is no more distinct from the Greek of Homer, or from the Gothic of Ulfilas, or from the Anglo-Saxon of

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. pp. 18-20.

Alfred, than the Romance dialects from each other; that, in fact, the resemblance is more striking between Sanscrit and Lithuanian, and between Sanscrit and Russian, than between French and Italian. This circumstance proves that all the essential grammatical forms of these languages had been fully framed and established before the first separation of the Aryan family took place, that is to say, at a time before there were any Grecians to speak Greek, or any Brahmans to invoke God's name in Sanscrit.

The science of comparative philology enables us to have glimpses of the social condition of our Aryan ancestors before they left their first abode. All historical documents of this period are lacking, for the simple reason that the time of which we are speaking is anterior to any historical records; "but comparative philology has placed in our hands a telescope of such power that where formerly we could see but nebulous clouds we now discover distinct forms and outlines." [1]

We see that our ancestors were no savages, but agricultural nomads, that they laboured, made roads, possessed the art of weaving and sewing; they built towns, kept domestic animals, lived under a kingly government, and counted at least up to one hundred. We learn this not only from the words father, mother, son, daughter, heaven, earth, but also from house, town, king, dog, cow, hatchet, and many others, which are found to be the same in the German, Celtic, Slavonic, Greek, Latin, and Sanscrit. They are the same because they all point to some more ancient language, the mother-tongue in use before the separation of the various Aryan tribes. From this period the other words also date, expressing all the degrees of relationship, even those by alliance, thus giving clear proof of the early organisation of family life.

At the same time a decimal system of numeration also existed, the numbers from one to a hundred, "in itself

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 17.

one of the most marvellous achievements of the human mind, produced from an abstract conception of quantity, regulated by a spirit of philosophical classification, and yet conceived, matured and finished before the soil of Europe was trodden by Greek, Roman, Slav, or Teuton. Such a system could only have been formed by a very small community, in which by the help of a tacit agreement, each number could only bear one signification. If we were suddenly obliged to invent new names for one, two and three we should quickly feel the great difficulty of the task; to supply new names for material objects would be comparatively easy, as these have different attributes which could be used in their designation; we could call the sea, the salt water; and the rain, the water of heaven; numbers are, however, such abstract conceptions that it would be foolish to attempt to find in them palpable attributes, and thus give expression to a merely quantitative idea."[1]

Since the names of the Aryan numbers up to one hundred are the same, it proves that they date from a time when our ancestors lived under circumscribed conditions united by common ties. This is not so with the word *thousand*; the names for *thousand* differ in German and Slavonic, because they have their rise after the dispersion of the race. Sanscrit and Zend share the name for thousand, which proves the union of the ancestors of the Brahmans and Zoroastrians—after their exodus—by the ties of a common language.

In this way the facts of language—which are so simple that a child could seize them—enable us to travel from the known to the unknown, and prove our descent from the once small family of the Aryas.

Man in the abstract has been studied for long years. Max Müller contemplates this abstraction in the Aryan man; this has not previously been attempted. Certainly

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 52.

we Aryans of to-day differ greatly from our first parents, but not *in toto*; the ties which connect us have not been severed, and he it is—our Aryan ancestor—who will help us to understand how we are verily the children of our fathers.

CHAPTER III

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LANGUAGE

It is possible to distinguish in ourselves four things: sensation, perception, conception, and the signs by means of which we designate objects, that is their names; these enable us to separate the one from the other. We must not imagine that these four exist as separate entities, "no words are possible without concepts, no concepts without percepts, no percepts without sensations."[1]—*Science of Thought*, p. 2.

These four constituent elements of thought are merely four different phases in the growth of what we call our mind.

I employ these terms because they are in use in philosophical language; there are also many others constantly on the lips of philosophers, some of them newly coined. This is greatly to be regretted, as much of our confusion of thought arises from this superabundance of philosophical terms. If such words as impression, sensation, perception, intuition, presentation, conception, soul, reason, and many others could for a time be banished from our philosophical dictionaries, and some only readmitted after they had undergone a thorough purification and were made to return to their primitive signification, an immense service would have been rendered to mental science; as every writer defines them as he will, or uses them without definition; and he seems to imagine that because there

[1] Max Müller says: "I use percept instead of presentation, because it is better understood in English."—*Science of Thought*, p. 2.

are so many words, there must also be so many variations, "Because in the German language there are two words: *verstand* and *vernunft*, both originally expressing the same thing, the greatest efforts have been made to show that there is something to be called *verstand*, totally different from what is called *vernunft*; and as there is a *vernunft* by the side of a *verstand* in German, English philosophers have been most anxious to introduce the same distinction between understanding and reason into English";[1] and "because we have a name for impression, and another for sensations, we are led to imagine that impressions do actually exist by the side of sensations. But what was originally meant by impression was not something beside sensation, but rather one side of sensation, namely, the passive side, which may be spoken of by itself, but which in every real sensation is inseparable from its active side."[2]

All the various shades and developments of sensation were doubtless distinguished and named for some very useful purpose; but the inconvenience was great when the terms became too numerous. "We may safely enjoy the wealth of language accumulated by a long line of thinkers, if only we take care not to accept a coin for more or less than it is really worth. We must weigh our words as the ancients often weighed their coins, and not be deceived by their current value."[3] When we have bravely resolved to throw away superfluous words, we need not imagine that we are the poorer, since we have only lost what we, in reality, never possessed. So powerful, however, is the action of words on thoughts, that as soon as we throw away a word, we feel ourselves to have been robbed of the thing itself; the sun rises just the same, though we say now that it does not rise. Those things which we call mind, intellect, reason, memory, in fact the

[1] Max Müller's *Science of Thought*, p. 72.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 17. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 75.

soul, have no existence as such—that is apart from ourselves. This assertion may sound very terrible to those philosophers who imagine that the dignity of man consists in the possession of these and other powers; at last there arises a complete mythology, a philosophic polytheism, when these are spoken of as distinct possessions, independent powers, with limits not very sharply defined; and however orthodox that polytheism has become, it is never too late to protest against it. In making use of these terms it should be understood that they represent certain modes of action and phases of the Ego.

It is to he regretted that our modern languages have nothing to replace the word "mind," such as there is in the Sanscrit language, meaning "working within." As soon as we speak of *mind* we cannot help thinking of an independent something dwelling in our body, whereas by mind I mean nothing but that working which is going on within, embracing sensation, perception, conception, and naming, and the worker who accomplishes this is the Ego.

Thus the Ego means nothing but consciousness of itself.

There is one word which it would be desirable to reintroduce into our philosophical phraseology and that is Logos; it means the word and the thought combined. Logos is a single intellectual act under two aspects; it is an untranslatable word. We were told at school that it was strange that the Greeks should not have distinguished between Logos Speech and Logos Reason, and it was represented as a progress toward clearer thought that later writers should have distinguished between Logos the spoken word and Logos the inner thought.

But the Greeks were right: no doubt it may be an advantage to be able to distinguish between two sides of the same thing, but that advantage is more than neutralised if such distinction leads us to suppose that these two sides are two different things. Let us avoid the very

common error that things which can be distinguished can therefore claim an independent existence; we can distinguish between an orange and its peel, but no orange can grow without peel, nor peel without the fruit.

Let it not be supposed that I am such a bigoted upholder of the unity of the Ego as to wish to see all these names banished from our philosophical dictionaries. Let us use the word Sense when speaking of the Ego as perceiving. Let us use Intellect when the Ego is simply conceiving; and the word language when it is speaking; let us even use the word *memory* when we wish to speak of the partial permanence of the work done by sensation, perception, and conception; and let us use Reason or Reasoning for the process which produces what the logicians call propositions and syllogisms; but let us never forget that neither to remember nor to reason implies the possession of a thing called reason or memory. All our mental life will remain just the same though we deny the existence of the terms which obscure our vision; let us hold fast to the existence of the Ego, it exists in its entity, it only is the worker, and it receives its highest expression in the Logos.

This truth, that thought and language are inseparable, that thought without language is as impossible as language without thought has only recently been affirmed by comparative philologists. Many learned writers are still unwilling to admit that ideas without words are impossible though at the same time they are quite willing to concede that words are impossible without concepts.[1]

We possess an immense number of books on logic, yet we are met everywhere by the same vagueness on this subject. John Stuart Mill speaks of language as one of the principal elements or helps of thought, but he never mentions any other instruments. This lack is probably owing to the unfortunate influence of modern languages

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 30.

which have two words, the one for language, the other for thought; this gives the impression that there is a substantial instead of an apparent difference between the two; it is also owing to the dislike of philosophers to allow that all which is most *lofty*, most spiritual in us should be dependent on such miserable crutches as words are supposed to be. Yet it is evident that we cannot advance one step towards philosophy without acknowledging the fact that we think in words and words only. This thought would be less difficult to grasp if we defined clearly what are thoughts. Sensation, pain, pleasure, dreaming, or willing cannot be called true thought, but variations of inward activity; in the same way as shrieks, howls, or even the sounds of real words, taken from a foreign language, are no more language than our emotions are thoughts. The word Logos expresses this, since it had originally the two meanings of gathering and combining, and so became the proper name of all that we call reason; but as it also means language, it tells us that the process of gathering and combining, which begins with sensation and passes on to perception and conception, reaches its full perfection only when the inward activity takes form in the Logos or speech.

Language therefore is not as has been often imagined, thought plus sound; but thought is really language minus sound; words are the external symbols of thought, sounding symbols when we articulate in a loud voice, but mute when we confine ourselves to merely thinking them, since it is a fact that we think in words, and it is not possible to think otherwise. The possession of a language is shown even in the tracing of whole sentences by ideographic signs, which need not be pronounced at all, or as in the astronomical signs in our almanacks which may be pronounced differently in different languages: or we may substitute algebraic signs for words; we could as well calculate without numbers as apply our reason without words

I have freely and fully admitted that thoughts may exist without words, because other signs may take the place of words between persons speaking different languages possibly between deaf and dumb people. Five fingers held up are quite sufficient to convey the concept of five, thus the hand may become the sign for five, both hands for ten, hands and feet for twenty. In America and Australia where many dialects are spoken this method has attained a great degree of perfection, but we notice that in all cases under review each one thinks in his own language and then translates his thought into pantomime.

A final fact adduced against the theory that it is impossible to think without language, which was very popular, is that deaf and dumb people cannot speak, and yet can think; this argument has no great value, as it is now averred that "a man born dumb who had always lived among deaf and dumb people, and had not been taught to express thoughts by signs would be capable of few higher intellectual manifestations than a monkey or an elephant; and this in spite of the fact that no naturalist could distinguish any difference between the size of their brains and those belonging to men who could speak." For deaf mutes to be able to think and reason, they must have learned from those who use words, then only can they substitute other signs for their words and concepts. Still Professor Huxley accords to these unfortunate men certain intellectual heritages derived from their parents.

These are some of the chief points in the science of language. The fundamental law which this science lays down of the unity of thought and speech is a torch which may throw light on the origin of man.

CHAPTER IV

ANIMALS

WHILST philosophers and moralists have studied men, and naturalists animals, Darwin considered it necessary to collect information concerning both men and beasts simultaneously before making a biography of the human being. With the modesty so often characteristic of a great genius, the English naturalist acknowledges that "many of the views which have been advanced are highly speculative, and some no doubt will prove erroneous. False facts are highly injurious to the progress of science, for they often long endure; but false views, if supported by some evidence, do little harm, as everyone takes a salutary pleasure in proving their falseness; and when this is done, one path towards error is closed and the road to truth is often at the same time opened."[1]

Although there is no doubt that the facts observed by Darwin and recorded in the *Origin of Species*, are perfectly correct, I hope to be able to dispose of the opinion that "man and animals follow parallel lines in their lives, but that man advances more quickly, and has taken his place in the front rank."

Whilst making a short *résumé* of remarks which Noiré and other learned writers have made on animals, I also propose to draw a comparison between the two who are so closely connected—the superior and inferior animal.

Darwin was not alone in his endeavour to prove that there exists no essential difference between man and beast; some have even asserted that the intelligence of certain

[1] Darwin's *Descent of Man*, vol. ii. p. 385.

animals is not only equal to, but at times, superior to that of man. We must be on our guard, however, against those numerous anecdotes which have led even philosophers astray; we will also divest our minds of prejudice and preconceived notions, that we may introduce some order into ideas which have been disturbed by superficial observers and the makers of false systems, those enemies of true science; let us candidly own the smallness of our knowledge concerning the mind of an animal; we do not in the least know how they philosophise, nor how an ox recognises his stable door. Instead of having recourse to animals and seeking to draw parallels between their mental faculties and ours, let us examine ourselves to find out what passes in our own minds. We shall then discover that we never in reality perceive anything unless we can distinguish it from other things by means, if not of a word, yet of a sign; that is till we have passed through the four stages of sensation, perception, conception, and more important than all, for our present purpose, of naming. When it is once acknowledged that concepts are impossible without words, and that man alone amongst organised beings possesses the power of language, and that the mental faculties of animals are different from ours in kind, and not only in degree, it naturally follows that a genealogical descent of man from animals is an impossible assumption.

Formerly, in comparing the characteristics of man and animals it was contended that the latter were ruled by instinct in place of the reason which was the attribute of the former; and although an affirmation is not an explanation it appeared sufficiently plausible and was accepted. But the fact is that both man and beast possess instinct. If the spider weaves his net by instinct, a child takes his mother's breast also by instinct; both are with regard to instinct at one level. Man involuntarily extends his arm to protect himself if he suddenly perceives an object near

him on the point of striking him. "If we tear a spider's web, and watch the spider first run from it in despair, then return and examine the mischief and endeavour to mend it. Surely we have the instinct of weaving controlled by observation, by comparison, by reflection, and by judgment."[1]

No one has hitherto succeeded in explaining and analysing the instinct said to be in animals. Cuvier[2] and other naturalists have compared it with habit.[3] This comparison gives an accurate notion of the frame of mind under which an instinctive action is performed, but does not necessarily explain its origin.

As reason develops in man, instinct plays a less important part; whereas a cat chases a mouse, a bird flies, and fish swim by instinct from their birth to their last day; and the actions of ants, bees, and moles, do not cease to amaze us, because they are inseparable from their structure and their vital functions. The natural impulses which guide birds and insects in making their nests, hives, and storehouses, cocoons of silk with which they have so enriched our world and theirs, are the results of constant and repeated acts, during the course of innumerable generations. The fact of not distinguishing the instinct which is in man from that found in animals and thus attributing man's conscious acts to the natural leanings which guide unconscious creatures, has perhaps caused Renan to assert that the monotheistic tendency of the Semitic race belongs to it by a religious instinct.

It is certain that impressions are received both by man and by animals; with both the knowledge of objects proceeds from the impressions made on the senses, thus

[1] Max Müller's *Science of Language*, vol. i. p. 402.

[2] "Cuvier maintained that instinct and intelligence stand in an inverse ratio to each other."—Darwin's *Descent of Man*, vol. i. p. 37. Translator's note.

[3] Frederick Cuvier and several of the older metaphysicians have compared instinct with habit.—Darwin's *Origin of Species*, p. 191.

transmitting the image to the intelligence; but there the likeness ends; the capacities differ. The animal remains the slave—in every sense of the word—of his organs; the sight of a bone to gnaw, the corner in which he lies, the signs of friendship that he receives from human beings, call forth in a dog a chain of feelings taking the place of the chain of ideas called out in man.

Man's capabilities of introducing intermediaries between the intention and the fulfilment of his object witness to his wideness of mind, his experience of the past and prevision of the future; all those things that he owes to his power of imagination and conception even in the case of things having no real existence, or which do not exist as yet; he reproduces at will the outward likeness of what is not at the moment before him. Thus man who names an object, *thinks* it; but the animal from not possessing language cannot *think* it and cannot reproduce it when out of its sight.

The use or non-use of tools creates a great gulf between man and the brutes. The most intelligent animal, a monkey of a high order, never uses a tool—even the most primitive—to accomplish his will; no one can ascribe to the animal creative actions, that is, it does not fashion an implement that it may attain another end; it has never been known to carry an object from one spot to another that it might act as a ladder to bring the animal nearer to the fruit it desired to reach.

But this concession, I think, we may make to Darwin; that even in the sphere of mental activities we can never entirely separate ourselves from the brute creation. We experience in ourselves a certain condition of mind, where fancies alternate with passing agitation, these proceed from intense, but confused emotions. This condition does not allow of clear explanation even to ourselves, since it has nothing in common with true thought, which is inseparable from the consciousness of objects, and therefore is lacking

in words with which to express itself. To Mendelssohn this mental condition was perfectly known, and he says, "It is exactly at that moment when language is impotent to express the experiences of the soul, that the sphere of music opens to us; if all that passes in us were capable of being expressed in words, I should write no more music."

A flock of birds about to migrate, all follow an unanimous impulse in uttering at starting a few high clear notes, perhaps impelled by an unknown motive, their inclinations and wills find collective expression therein, by a mutual impulse which comes from soundless depths of the life of the senses, carrying all before it. This universal sympathy, however difficult to explain, is one of the noblest possessions of the inferior animals; even the aptitude they display for certain mechanical acts of labour does not stand on the same level; but in the vocal manifestations of birds there is no indication of true thought, the basis of real language.

Now come, my dog, for a *tête-à-tête*. It would be impossible to hold converse with ants, bees, monkeys, moles, or birds, as I should not acknowledge them as my compeers, I should not admit them as intimates; but you I know well; and, let me tell you, your judges have shown their impartiality towards you; none of the vices which degrade us—your superiors—have been laid to your account. You are called neither gourmand, thief, idler, nor hypocrite; but you lack the qualities that might have been yours had you possessed the faculty of combination. They say that you create nothing because you fail to see what purpose tools may serve; and you are ignorant of the fact that *A.* being given, *B.* must follow—such is combination. Still, on looking closely, it is possible to discover amongst us—your superiors—those who are stupid—or awkward—who take small advantage of all the means put within their reach to recede from a

false position, to recover from the effects of a wrong step, or, what is still more important, remedy their ignorance. Yes, there are many such, and these also lack the faculty of combination.

Your judges also assert that from the want on your part of being able to attach one idea to another, you do not think of your master when he is absent from you. What ingratitude! But I wonder whether those friends, who profess so much pleasure in my company, think of me when I am absent; perhaps no more than you do.

Let me continue my enquiries for a few minutes. We will suppose that we two are in my study. I am occupied with a book, and am not thinking of you at all. You are stretched at my feet with your nose between your paws, watching a fly near you. I make a sudden movement, you look at me, and at the same moment wag your tail. . . . Am I to suppose that you wag it to hide your dislike to me? The noble quality which I and all your superiors possess is lacking in you; you have no speech for thought in which to tell me your love for me; but if you could speak, that is, were like one of ourselves, would you be as truthful as you are now, being only a dog that has nothing but his tail with which to make his master understand his feelings towards him? Schopenhauer . . . but you know nothing of Schopenhauer, if you could speak I should teach you to read, and then you would know him. Schopenhauer is a great and learned philosopher, who says, "How much this movement of the tail surpasses in sincerity many other assurances of friendship and devotion."[1]

This is a long digression on Darwin's idea that man and animals lead parallel lives, but that the one progresses quickly, the other slowly. I think I have shown that it is not a question of rapidity or tardiness of progress, but rather whether both travellers are equally well equipped with the means of passing the Rubicon.

[1] Max Müller's *Science of Thought*, p. 178.

CHAPTER V

PRIMITIVE HUMANITY

SOME courage is required to attack the subject of comparative philology as treated by certain learned authors; they are bold enough to seek to transport themselves to an age of such remote antiquity that history is silent on the subject, but in which a nascent humanity endeavoured to find expression for its sensations in a language which probably had no name.

When my attention was first attracted to the work of this school, so long as my mind was content to skim over the surface of an unknown world, so immeasurably distant from us, and whilst flitting too rapidly over it to be able to distinguish any of its features, it presented itself to me as a creation of my heated imagination. Since then I have lived in that world of wonders, and I then grasped the fact that it was quite possible for this world to have been a reality. But to journey thither, even to live in this strange country, the only path to which is by induction, in company with Max Müller and Noiré, who, apparently, are its inhabitants, from the ease with which they move in it, is a totally different matter from explaining the methods of getting there, or describing the sojourn. I should have to draw information from various sources, and the scientific and hypothetical data connected therewith would require sorting and rearranging to make them assimilate more easily; these would present difficulties not readily surmounted.

How could a reasonable and speaking being come forth from that which had no reason and no language?

The earliest traditions are silent on the manner of man's acquisition of his first ideas and his first words. But because a problem has not been solved, that is no reason for the assertion that it is insoluble, unless a refutation is at once demonstrable, as in the squaring of the circle. "If every one had abstained from striving to penetrate hidden things, no sciences would exist," Noiré remarked. Newton might have said: "The facts that a stone falls and the planets move are known by actual experience, why search out the laws which produce these phenomena?" And the theory of gravitation would have been lacking. Lyell might have said: "We see that the crust of the earth is composed of several strata, why reckon the time required for their formation?" And there would have been no science of geology. Liebig might have said: "We see that clover grows and cattle prosper, why should the relation of cause and effect concern us?" And there would have been no organic chemistry. Adam Smith might have said: "We know by experience that valuable objects can be exchanged, and that their prices fluctuate, why should we study the cause of rise and fall?" And this chapter would have been missing from political economy.

No road presents itself to me by which to arrive in the midst of primitive humanity; of necessity, therefore, I have recourse to analogy, which, under the circumstances, is not the worst expedient.

When the Romans first encountered Germans, they were chiefly struck by the great stature, the blue eyes, and the light hair of this inimical race. Tacitus, in alluding to this fact, says that each German exactly resembled his fellow. Although we are familiar with the external appearance of various nations, yet if we found ourselves in the presence of a large number of negroes we should experience an analogous sensation, only by degrees should we distinguish one from the other. In an

intensified degree primitive man must have had similar experiences when, first finding himself in a world of which he knew nothing, and of which he understood nothing, the consciousness of what he saw around him was making itself apparent. These early races learnt the meaning of the details of surrounding nature but slowly; their eyes followed the brilliant circle as it moved from one quarter of the heavens to the other; they noticed the fire which came whence they knew not; they heard the crash of thunder, reproduced by the echoes in the mountains synchronising with the devastations caused by the storm. If one man alone had witnessed these terrifying effects in nature, his reason would have tottered from fear; the stones and the herbs of the field could not share his agitation; the death of a man from terror would leave them unmoved. Happily man was not alone, all those around him shared his agitation, and the terror manifested itself on each by signs which each would understand instinctively. This period of semi-consciousness before the full awakening might have been a prolonged one, but physical sensations and necessities multiplied themselves, and were very various and imperative; action was indispensable if privations were to be avoided; and instinct came to their aid. The need of guarding themselves from the burning rays of the sun caused them to provide shelters by interlacing branches of trees; to protect themselves from cold they took the skins of wild beasts to throw over their shoulders; where natural caverns were insufficient for their wants they made themselves refuges in the sides of the mountains; they were forced to light and maintain fires; sharpen stones either for tools or for weapons of defence; the wants of one were the wants of all, and all gave themselves to the task of satisfying them. It is so evident that primitive activity must have been co-operative, that it outrages common sense to picture each man labouring by himself for himself

alone. The mental phenomenon known as *intention*, was the common property of all; the mutual sympathy played the part of the electric current of our laboratories, and the inarticulate sounds escaping involuntarily from the lips of each worker, served as a means of communication.

In order the better to understand the function of the voice in the education of primitive man, let us look around us and listen. Whenever our senses are excited, and our muscles hard at work, we feel a kind of relief in uttering sounds which in themselves have no meaning. "They are a relief rather than an effort, a moderation or modulation of the quickened breath in its escape through the mouth."[1]

When men work together, on account of the nature of the task requiring united effort, they are naturally inclined to accompany their occupations with certain more or less rhythmical utterances, which react beneficially on the inward disturbance caused by muscular effort. When a body of men march, row, or wield hammers, they do not keep silence; formerly soldiers sang as they marched to battle; our modern civilisation only caused the substitution of fife and drums for the songs; and our soldiers do not readily abandon these measured accompaniments, which make them less susceptible of fatigue. When savage races dance they make the air resound with measured cadences; our peasants sing while joining in the country dances; the custom of singing during work is more marked amongst those who belong to the races which are less under the influence of civilisation, and are more entirely absorbed by their manual occupation, and with whom personal preoccupation has small hold.

These inarticulate sounds which Noiré has named *clamor concomitans* and Max Müller *clamor significans*, uttered by primitive men when working in concert, and

[1] Max Müller's *Science of Thought*, p. 300.

always inseparable from acts, could be differentiated in accordance with the acts performed; and at a period when actual speech did not yet exist, they would always have this practical value, they would awaken the remembrance of acts performed in the past, and be repeated in the present, they would thus be instantly understood by all, and readily retained by the memory. But what was there to determine the application of certain sounds to certain occupations? This has not been made clear. Plato, Socrates, and others, have considered that the origin of language might be traced to the imitation of the sounds of nature, and have sought for a resemblance between these sounds and certain letters of the alphabet, but even were it possible here and there to discover a faint analogy, our efforts would only end in contradictions. There seems to be neither necessity nor absolute freedom in the choice of the sounds expressive of these acts, but rather the result of some accident, or of causes of which we are ignorant. In any case these sounds were merely the materials of which language was built.

It will be easily understood that nothing would penetrate more deeply into man's consciousness, or produce mutual understanding more readily, than acts undertaken and accomplished with the same end in view by a number of men united in a common impulse. During the digging of the caves, the weaving of the nets, the thrashing of the grain, the workers would follow with their eyes the gradual transformation perceptible in these activities, and the sounds which they emitted, or the half-formed words issuing from their lips would be modified or softened at each development in the work; these developments becoming more and more distinct, more and more impressed with their own special characteristic. The idea of individuality must have been very clouded, very confused amongst primitive man; that which one saw the other saw after the same manner; they designed each

object in creating it; in this way the world became as a book to them, this book, the result of their combined labour, they learnt to read fluently by means of these sounds and words which increased as they varied. Thus work—man's good genius—is proved to be the source of what is truly human, viz., reason and language.

Here I will note a curious fact and one which is historical. At a period when writing was unknown in India, the Brahmans had already established the rules of poetical metre, which were originally connected with dancing and music. These rules had been preserved in the Veda. The various Sanscrit names for metre are a witness of the union of corporal and phonetic movements. The root of *Khandas*, metre, is the same as the Latin *scandere* in the sense of stepping; *vritta*, metre, from *vrit*, verto—to turn, meant originally the last three or four steps of a dancing movement, the turn, the *versus*, which determined the whole character of dance or of the metre. *Trishtubh*, the name of a common metre in the Veda, meant three-step, because its turn—its *vritta* or *versus* consisted of three steps, ∪ - -. Thus the innate necessity that man feels of linking the play of the vocal chords to the movement of hands or feet, had been controlled by fixed laws, twenty-four centuries ago, by the Hindoo grammarians; and the most recent theories of modern writers on the subject attest the excellence of these laws. The assertion that it is natural to peasants not to keep silence when working is of very ancient date, but Noiré was the first to deduce scientific data from the fact.

The study of Sanscrit has shown us that two thousand years ago it occurred to Hindoo grammarians to investigate the origin of the words of their language, when they discovered that all words could be reduced to roots, and that these roots all expressed various forms of activity; that they were therefore verbs, and that the number of these roots was very restricted. Our present philologists

have continued this work and are not only able to acknowledge the accuracy of the Brahmanic discovery, but also to certify that the grammatical analysis of the Hindoos, put forth 500 years before our era, has never been surpassed. It is important to remember that roots are the fundamental elements which permeate the whole organism of the language. Hebrew has been reduced by Renan and other Hebraists to about 500 roots; the work has still to be done for the whole Semitic family. The same process has been carried out with regard to the Aryan languages; we find the number of roots in Sanscrit reduced to about 800; of Gothic about 600; rather more than 400 in the Teutonic family, and 600 in the Slavic. The Ural-Altaic languages have also undergone a partial analysis of the same kind, and the result at present corresponds to that obtained by the examination of the other families. After eliminating the tertiary and secondary roots from the Sanscrit the residuum is 600 or 500, and we arrive at the fact that this entire language, and, in a great measure, all the Aryan languages, can be traced back to an extremely small number of roots.

As the Hindoo grammarians asserted that all roots contain the representation of various forms of activity, it behoved our philologists to investigate this and discover their meaning. Professor Noiré thought that the consciousness that men had of their own acts must have formed the origin of the primitive concepts of the human mind, and found expression in signs or words. Max Müller shows us[1] that all the Sanscrit roots express a concept or consciousness of the repeated acts, the acts with which man in his infancy would be most familiar. But it must be noted that the concepts or signs are not of single acts, but the realisation of repeated acts; to dig was not to put a spade into the ground once, it is the action of digging continuously; to sharpen was not to pass one

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 219.

flint over another once, it was the continual action of sharpening. The consciousness of accomplishing these repeated acts as if one act, became the first germ of conceptual thought. During this initial phase of thought, when the first consciousness of his own repeated acts awoke in man and assumed a conceptual character, will, act and knowledge were as yet one and undivided, and the whole of his conscious knowledge was subjective, exclusively concerned with his own voluntary act. We possess the genealogy of a large number of Aryan roots, and we find on examination that the activity which formed their basis was at the beginning always a creative activity, since it called into life conceptions which up to that time had not existed.

Nothing is more interesting than researches into the origin of the growth of human thought, when carried out not according to the systems of certain philologists of our day, but historically, after the fashion of the Indian trapper, who notes on the sand every imprint of the footsteps of him whom he pursues.

For the present I will content myself by bringing forward in illustration three primary roots. *Vê* (*Vâ*), which is, to weave; *Mar*, to crush; and *Khan*, to dig. *Vê* (*Vâ*), *Mar*, and *Khan* are thus verbs.

When we now picture the four acts of weaving, spinning, sewing, and knitting, they appear so to differ the one from the other, that it seems impossible to consider them other than four distinct acts, and difficult to believe that there is one common origin to all. These four processes, however, all had their germ in the one primitive act of interlacing the boughs of trees to form a hedge or roof. This root *Vê* (*Vâ*) had an immense number of offshoots; from the acts of interlacing and platting came the conception of binding, in Latin *vieo*, to twist, to divide; in German, *winden*, *wickeln*; the Latin words *vitis*, a vine; *vimen*, osier, a twig; *viburnum*, a climbing plant; the Slavic word

vetla, willow; the Sanscrit *vetra*, reed, rush; the German word for rush, *binse*, is connected with *binden*, to join, and the secondary meaning of ties of relationship and alliance: again, in the Old High-German, *nothbendig*, or *nothwendigkeit*, bound, straitened, and the Gothic *naudibandi*, tie, chain. All these words, whether in the Roman, German, or Slavonic dialects, have retained the root *Vê* (*Vâ*), so that it is impossible not to recognise the trunk of which these are the branches. Thus a large number of apparently dissimilar images became entangled the one with the other, and in proportion as we approach their starting-point do we find them discarding their own special signification, and becoming absorbed in the single conception of weaving and platting.

The root *mar*, to grind, has also the meaning of to crush, to powder, to rub down, etc., and whether we look at the Latin, Greek, Celtic, German, or Slav, the words representing the verb *to mill*, and the name *mill* come thence; the transition from *milling* to *fighting* is natural; thus Homer used the word *mar-na-mai*, I fight, I pound. *Mar* produced in Latin the words *mordeo*, I bite; *morior* (originally, to decay), I die; *mortuus*, dead; *mors*, death; *morbus*, illness; in Greek, *marasmos*, decay; rendered in German by *sich aufreiben*, to become exhausted. In Sanscrit we must remember that the consonants *r* and *l* are cognate and interchangeable; thus, *mar* = *mal*; and that *ar* in Sanscrit is shortened, and the vowel modified and pronounced *ri*, *mar* = *mri*; that *ar* may be pronounced *ra*, and *al*, *la*; *mar* = *mra* and *mal* = *mla*: thus in Sanscrit we find *mrita*, dead; *mritya*, death, and *mriye*, I die. One of the earliest names for man was *marta*, the dying; the equivalent in Greek for the Sanscrit *mra* and *mla* is *mbro*, *mblo*; and after dropping the *m* becomes *bro* and *blo*; *brotos*, mortal. Having chosen this name for himself, man gave the opposite name to the gods; he called them *Ambrotoi*, without decay,

immortal; and their food *ambrosia*, immortality. An offshoot of *mar* is *mard* and *mrj*; thence *mraduti*, rubbing down, pulverising, grind to powder; *mrid* is in Sanscrit the word for dust, and afterwards was used for soil in general or earth; *mrid*, to weaken, to soften, to melt; thus, fluid mass. This idea in English takes the form *malt*, grain soaked and softened; then the Greek *meldo*, and the Gothic *mulda*, soft ground or morass, and that which is softened by use or the action of time. The Latin *sordes* and *sordidus* are connected herewith, as the same root may be found in *smarna*, Gothic, and the Greek *mélas* and *moros*, black, and in *murus*, brown-black; in the Russian *smola*, wax and resin. "Colour was conceived originally as the result of the act of covering or extending a fluid over a surface; it was not till the art of painting, in its most primitive form, was discovered and named, that there could have been a name for colour."[1] The name of colour in Sanscrit is *varna*, from *var*, to cover. The idea conveyed by the words, to smooth, to flatter, to soften, to mollify, to melt a hard substance, to polish a rough surface by constant rubbing, led to the same terms being used for expressing the softening influence which man exercised on man, by looks, gestures, words or prayers, and these expressions were especially used by men in their relations to the gods, when they strove to propitiate them by supplications and sacrifices: thus the prayer which we now translate by "Be gracious unto us, O God," meant originally, "Melt to us; be softened, ye gods."

Language grew and made offshoots, but without confusion; disorder had no place in the progress of thought (still less chance), which was simple and rational. This was not the development of the conscious effort towards some goal. At this period there was no such thing as reflection properly so called; for instance, man did not

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Thought*, p. 303.

ponder how best to express a feeling of fear, since fear, like so many other impressions, received vague expression before the concept of fear acquired shape; but our ancestors had a root to express shaking (in Sanscrit *kap*, *kamp*, to shake): they used it to describe fear, which manifested itself in the trembling of voice or limbs. Thus, "I shake" might mean, "I shake a tree," or "I am shaken," "I am shaken by him" (by my horse), but also "I am trembling"; from it we have in Greek *karnos*, smoke, not what shakes, or is shaken, but what is in a shaking state, that which moves; *kup*, which is probably a modification of *kamp*, means to shake inwardly, to be angry.

Some learned writers have felt disconcerted when after tracing words to their source, they have found nothing but roots with general meanings, such as to go, to move, to run, to do; however, it is by means of these vague, pale conceptions that language has obtained the material for an entire language. The Aryan root *ar* signified originally to go, to send, to advance, to proceed, going regularly, to stir. Applied to the stirring of the soil, it took the meaning of ploughing; in Latin *ar-are*, in Greek *ar-oun*, in Irish *ar*, in Lithuanian *ar-ti*, in Russian *ora-ti*; this root, from its meaning of advancing regularly, was the name of the plough; one derivative was applied to the cattle fit for ploughing, and also to the labourer. *Ar* was also used for the ploughing of the sea, or rowing, and was found in the words rower and rudder. The Latin word *ævum*, originally from *i*, to go, became the name of time, age; and its derivative *æviternus*, *æturnus* was made to express eternity. It was by a poetical fiat that the Greek *probata*, which originally meant no more than things walking forward, became in time the name of cattle. In French, the word *meuble* means literally anything that is movable, but it became the name of chairs, tables, wardrobes, etc. In this way we see the power of language, which, out of a few simple elements, has created

names sufficient to express the infinite aspects of nature.

The ramifications of the Aryan root *Dâ* give a good idea of the process. Thus *Dâ* = to give, is in the Sanscrit *dădāmi*, I give; in Latin, *do*; in Old Slavonic, *da-mi*; in Lithuanian, *du-mi*; in French, *donner* and *pardonner*; in Latin, *trado*, to give over; in Italian, *tradire*; in French, *trahir*, *trahison*; in Latin again, *reddo*, to give back; in French, *rendre* and *rente*. Side by side with the root *Dâ*, there is another root also *Dâ*, exactly the same in all outward appearance; it consists of $D + \hat{A}$, but is totally distinct from the former. While from the former we have in Sanscrit, *dâ-tram*, a gift, we have from the latter *dâ'-tram*, a sickle. The meaning of the second root is to cut, to carve; the difference is shown by the accent remaining on the radical syllable in *dâ'-tram*, *i.e.*, the cutting (active); whilst it leaves the radical syllable in *dâ-trám*, *i.e.*, what is given (passive).

The history of these roots *dâ* affords an opportunity of noticing a curious resemblance between natural history and philology, two sciences which otherwise are totally different, but alike in one idea which enters into the inwardness of both. Darwin admitted four or five progenitors in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, so that the primary elements of all living organisms are the simple cells. In the same way philologists have discovered that there remain in the end certain simple elements of human speech—the primordial roots—which have sufficed to provide the innumerable multitude of words used by the human race. A principle neglected by a great number of evolutionists is that if two origins, whether the roots of language or living cells, have at their starting-point an absolutely similar appearance, and afterwards diverge, it is because at their origin they bore in themselves the germs destined to produce this divergence. Darwin says that two organic cells, which in the embryonic stage may per-

fectly resemble each other, in growing, gradually develop, the one into an inferior animal, the other into a superior animal, never varying the process; the reason of which fact is that the cells, although not distinguishable the one from the other, differ in the rudiments or principle of life: in the same way philologists say that when two roots have the same sound, but produce families of perfectly distinct words, it is because the germs in each differ. We learn from this that the sound of the words is a matter of indifference at the commencement of a language; no one has succeeded, or will succeed, in making the sound alone the vehicle of a conception.

To Locke belongs the merit of having first clearly asserted that roots, the true irreducible elements of language, which furnish words for the most abstract and sublime conceptions, had at the beginning only a material or sensuous meaning, and this fact, on which idealists and materialists are agreed, is confirmed by comparative philologists. All primitive roots express directly only those acts and those conditions which come under the domain of the senses; all express the consciousness of repeated acts familiar to the members of a society in its infancy, such as pounding, striking, weaving, tying, burning, rubbing, moving, cutting, sharpening, softening. By means of generalisation and specialisation, the roots have acquired the most abstract terms of our advanced society; thus the root to burn developed into the thought of to love, and also to be ashamed; to dig, came to mean to search for, to enquire; the root which means to gather, expressed in primitive logic what we now call observation of facts; the connection of major and minor, or even syllogism. This is without doubt, and it is as certain that the words rake and pinchers came from the verbs to rake and to pinch.

To make the assertion of Locke the more striking, Noiré adds: "When the representative words springing from one root are found side by side, it is always the

more ancient of the two which expresses the more material act. The verbs to tear and to cut are the offshoots of a single root; but the passage from the concept of tearing to that of cutting would be slowly effected; the act of tearing was immediate with man, cutting was a mediate act, and of later date, since it could not be done whilst the instrument was lacking."

I shall now bridge over the distance between the primordial roots, and the organised language as we possess it, in order to show how our ancestors succeeded in forming real phrases, that is to say, intelligible propositions; this will show us the continuous thread which connects our present language with primitive speech.

We can show that both dictionary and grammar are made up of predicative roots and demonstrative elements. By the help of the first we make affirmations concerning things, derived from our knowledge of another object or of many, either in combination under one name, or taking each separately. With the demonstrative element we point to any object in space or time, by using such words as this, that, then, here, there; near, far, above, below, and others of the same kind, whose existence may be explained as a survival of the gesticulating phase in which objects were neither conceived nor described but pointed out; from this we are not to infer that gestures—even accompanied by sounds—gave birth to speech, since they rather excluded it. In their primitive form and intention, these demonstrative elements are addressed to the senses rather than to the intellect. They have in themselves no meaning, and to be of service they must be attached to words that have. The history of the root *Khan*, to dig, will explain my thought. When our Aryan ancestors had learnt to say *Khan*, and they wanted to distinguish between those who were digging and the instruments used in digging, between the object of the digging and the time and place of the work, it is possible that these demonstrative suf-

fixes, combined with predicative roots, formed bases, such as *Khan-ana*, *Khan-i*, *Khan-a*, *Khan-itra*, and still others, which were intended probably for digging-here, digging-now, dig-we, dig-you. By means of these combinations, which varied in their application according to the customs of different villages and families, the speaker sought to distinguish between the subject acting and the object acted upon; and when this difficulty was surmounted, a great step had been taken, the passage from perception to conception was accomplished, and this passage no philosopher prior to Noiré had made clear. "We must always bear in mind that we are speaking here of times, so far beyond the reach of history, and of intellectual processes so widely removed from our own, that none would venture to speak dogmatically on what was actually passing in the minds of the early framers of language when they first uttered these words."[1] All we can do is to hazard an explanation, and accept it in as far as it seems reasonable; and in the interest of science, we must carefully guard ourselves from asserting that our theory is the only true one. It is easy to conceive that after centuries of constant use certain derivatives should have become unalterably attached to certain meanings, and others should have also retained their special meanings. But what we do not know, is how the sounds destined to become demonstrative elements or personal pronouns were restricted to the terms required for such words, as—here, there, those, he, I, that, etc. There were cases in which a verb in the infinitive would develop into a phrase without any additions being made to it; it would suffice, for instance, if a man uttered the word *Khan* in a commanding voice—as we should say "work"—for his fellow-labourers to understand that they were to begin to dig. Thus the imperative could be considered a complete sentence with as much justice as Veni-Vedi-Vici would

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Thought*, p. 223.

be termed independent and complete sentences. "The shortest sentence of all is, no doubt, the imperative, and it is in the imperative that almost to the present day roots retain their simplest form." [1]

Our intellects in the present day are developed by the discourses we hear, the books we read, the reflections suggested by our experiences of life; our vocabularies become enriched as our knowledge increases and embraces a greater number of subjects; and if we retrace the path taking us to our ancestors who could not count beyond four sometimes, we should find words and ideas becoming fewer and conspicuous by their absence. It does not therefore follow that because we use language that we made it. It is not our invention; to us every language is traditional. "The words in which we think are channels of thought which we have not dug ourselves, but which we found ready made for us. The work of making language belongs to a period in the history of mankind beyond the reach of the ordinary historian, and of which we in our advanced state of mental development can hardly form a clear conception." Yet that time must have been a fact not less possible of verification than that geological period when "the earth was absorbed in producing the carboniferous vegetation which still supplies us with the means of warmth, light, and life, accumulating during enormous periods of time small deposits of organic matter forming the strata of the globe on which we live. In the same manner the human mind formed that linguistic vegetation, the produce of which still supplies the stores of our grammars and dictionaries"; and after a close examination of these primordial roots whence our language has sprung, we find that it does not consist in a conglomeration of words, the result of an agreement amongst a certain number of men, or the result of chance, but expresses human activity by means of verbs, the living

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Thought*, p. 421.

and vivifying portion of speech by the side of which the remainder may almost be considered as dead matter.

The question of the birth of the substantive, without being deliberately posed as a problem, occupied the minds of the Grecian philosophers, and was involved in their researches concerning the relation of an object to the name it bears, of the unknown cause by which a certain name designates a certain object and no other. Whilst the Greeks speculated on the subject after a tentative manner, building up theories which later observations were not long in upsetting, the Hindoos were also engaged in efforts to solve the problem by the help of a more reliable process—the historical.

The early grammarians, having found that words came from roots expressing general concepts, and that these concepts represented some sort of activity, made this fact the basis of their studies; profound thinkers as they were they discovered that man at first could not give a name to a tree, an animal, a star, a river, nor to any other object without discovering first some special quality that seemed at the time most characteristic of the object to be named. Sanscrit has a root *As*, having amongst other meanings sharpness, quickness; from the same root came words for needle, point, sharpness of sight, quickness of thought; this root is found in the Sanscrit name for a horse, which is *asva*, runner or racer, one who leaves space quickly behind him. Many other names might have been given to the horse besides the one here mentioned, but all must recall some characteristic trait of this animal; that name, *the quick*, could also have been given to other animals, but having been repeatedly applied to one, it became unfit for other purposes, and the horse retains undisputed possession. The Sanscrit *aksha*, eye, comes from the same root *as*, which also meant to point, to pierce. Another name for eye in Sanscrit is *netram*, leader, from *nî*, to lead.

Noiré has just put forth an ingenious theory, that the first substantives would not be miller, digger, weaver, carpenter; but flour, cave, pit, mat, hedge, club, arrow, boat, because these were what had been thought and willed, whilst the agents, of no account from that point of view, remained in the shade, forgotten, and it is possible that for some time no names were given to them.

"When we have once seen that thought in its true sense is always conceptual, taking a verbal form, and that every word is derived from a conceptual root, we shall be ready for the assertion that words being conceptual can never stand for a single percept."—MAX MÜLLER.

Locke first insisted that names are not the signs of things themselves, but always the signs of our concepts of them. This remark received small attention at first, and remained little appreciated until such time as the discoveries of our contemporaries, with no preconcerted unanimity, confirmed its value. Max Müller explains Locke's words in the following manner: "Each time that we use a general name, if we say dog, tree, chair, we have not these objects before our eyes, only our concepts of them; there can be nothing in the world of sense corresponding even to such simple words as dog, tree, chair. We can never expect to see a dog, a tree, a chair. Dog means every kind of dog from the greyhound to the spaniel; tree, every kind of tree from the oak to the cherry; chair, every kind of chair from the royal throne to the artisan's stool. We may see a spaniel or a Newfoundland dog; we may see a fir or an apple tree; we may see such and such a chair. People often imagine that they can form a general image of a dog by leaving out what is peculiar to every individual dog."[1]

This general idea we have in our mind of which we

[1] *Science of Thought*, pp. 77, 78. *Natural Religion*, p. 381.

can talk, but our eyes cannot see it as they could a real object. Nothing that we name, nothing that we find in our dictionary can ever be heard, or seen, or felt. "We can even have names for things which never existed, such as gnomes; also for things which exist no more, or which exist not yet, such as the grapes of the last harvest, and those of the next. The mere fact that I call a thing past or future ought to be sufficient to show that it is my concept of which I am speaking, and not the thing as independent of me."[1]

Berkeley showed that it is simply impossible for any human being to make to himself a general image of a triangle, for such an image would have to be at the same time right-angled, obtuse-angled, acute-angled, and other kinds also; such an object does not exist; whereas it is perfectly possible to have an image of any single triangle; to name some characteristic features common to all triangles, and thus to form a name and at the same time a concept of a triangle.[2] This mental process which Berkeley described so well as applied to modern concepts we can adopt with regard to all, even the most primitive. Man, in entering a forest, discovered in the trees something that was interesting to him. For practical purposes trees were particularly interesting to the primitive framers of language, because they could be split in two, three, or four pieces, cut, shaped according to the size of the piece into blocks, planks, boats, and shafts; any object for which the necessity had made itself felt. Hence, from a root *dar*, to tear, our Aryan ancestors called trees *dru*, or *dâru*, literally what can be torn, or split, or cut; from the same root the Greeks called the skin of an animal *dérma*, because it was torn off, and a sack *dóros* (in Sanscrit *driti*), because it was made of leather, and a spear *dóry*, because it came from a tree, and was cut and shaped and planed.

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 79. [2] *Natural Religion*, p. 382.

Such words being once given would produce many offshoots; the Celts of Gaul and of Ireland called their priests *Druids*, literally the men of oak-groves. The Greeks called the spirits of the forest trees *Dryades*; and the Hindoos called a man of wood, or a man with a wooden, or, as we say, flinty heart, *dâruna*, cruel.

The immense number of intelligible roots gave birth to many new images, these roots crossed and recrossed, for the concepts of to go, to give, to move, to make, would be the foundations of others, in some ways differing; one idea or thought in its flight would meet others perhaps of a conflicting nature, thoughts and words would equally undergo incessant modifications, which fact explains why in these earlier stages of language the members of a community soon ceased to understand each other if separated but for a short period of time.

Ovid, in speaking of the chaos at the beginning of the world, makes a picture which would equally well describe the birth of language. "Matter was in an unformed mass . . . the sky, the earth, the sea had all one aspect; there where was the earth, was also the sea, and the sky was there also."

The extraordinary destinies of the roots I have named constitutes a short chapter only, in the birth and development of tongues; but short as it is, it suffices to give us an idea of the elastic nature of these roots, their faculty of extension, and the part they play in the economy of language, and in the administration of the affairs of the human mind.

Every mental phenomenon has its history, which can only be discovered by tracing it to its source; and as speech has undergone many phases, of which the earlier must have been very different from those now in existence, it is pardonable in the greatest philosophers of antiquity not to have known the intricacies of the human mind, which this changeable speech could alone interpret. The

ancients knew their own times, but were ignorant of the preceding ones, in the same way they knew their own language only, and of this language only its contemporary form ; and in the case of a word whose meaning was lost or of a foreign word, they sought its origin in an idiom with which they were familiar ; in other words, not where it could be found.

For a long time man only knew one kind of being, his own ; and possessed one language only, that which expressed his own acts and his own states ; the primitive men were sufficiently advanced to say : " let us dig," " grind," " they weave " ; but if, at the beginning, concepts and speech arose from the consciousness of their own activity, how was the advance made when men desired to speak of the external objects of the world which they saw around them, and were conscious of not having made, and which consequently remained outside the sphere of their wills and of their experience ? It is clear that these outward objects to be grasped and named, must have their part in the human activities for which names had already been found. When he saw the lightning tearing a hole in the field, or splitting the trunk of a tree, man could no longer say, " *We* have dug this hole, *you* have split the tree." It was no longer *someone*, but *something* that had dug and struck. Nothing seems more simple to us than after saying " *I dig* " to say also " *it digs*," and yet it was a passing to a new world of thought, from the conscious feeling of our own activity to the intuition of the activity of an outward object ; this mental act, though inevitable, was by no means an easy one ; men realised that the world around was a reflex of themselves, the only light was the light from within. If men could measure, so could the moon ; hence he was called the measurer of the sky, from the root *Mâ*, to measure ; the moon was called *Mâs*, that which measures, its actual name in Sanscrit ; in Latin, *mensis* ; in Greek, *mêné* ; English, *moon* ;

German, *Monat*; in Russian, *miésets.* Men who ran called themselves runners; also the rivers they named *sar,* running; and to designate the position of the river they added the suffix *it, sar-it*; literally, running here. Thus *sarit* is river in Sanscrit; *Mâs* and *sarit* thus become complete, intelligible sentences. What we call lightning was originally, tearing, digging, bursting, sparkling; what we call storm and tempest were, grinding, smashing, bursting, blowing; if man could smash, so could the thunderbolt, hence it was called the smasher; and tempest and storm and thunderbolt may have been, smashing, grinding, hurling; and with the addition of the suffix, smashing here, now, there, then.

We have seen that the attribute which was the peculiar characteristic of an object supplied its name, but as most objects possessed more than one attribute, more than one designation were given to it; thus several names were used for river besides *sarit,* each representing one of its aspects; when flowing in a straight line it was called *sîrâ,* arrow, plough, plougher; if it seemed to nourish the fields it was *mâtar,* mother; if it separated or protected one country from another, it became *sindhu,* the defender, from *sidh* or *sedhati,* to keep off; if it became a torrent it received the name of *nadi,* noisy. In all these forms the river is considered as acting, and is named by roots expressing action; it nourishes, it traces a furrow, it guards, it roars as a wild beast roars. The sun has many attributes; he is brilliant, the warmer, the generator, the scorcher, he is vivifying, overpowering, his many qualities giving him fifty different names, all synonyms of the sun. The earth also had many, it was known by twenty-one names, amongst others it was *urvî,* wide; *jurithvî,* broad; *mahi,* great; but each characteristic trait of the earth could also be found in other objects, thus *urivî* also meant a river; sky and dawn were called *prithvî*; and *mahî* (great, strong) is used for cow and speech. Hence earth,

river, sky, dawn, cow, and speech would become homonyms.

These names are of clearly defined objects, all recognisable by the senses; this fact entitles us to apply the following definition to this primitive stage of language; the conscious expression of impressions perceived by the senses.

But there is another class of words differing somewhat from those we have named, such words, as day, night, spring, winter, dawn and twilight; these lack the individuality and tangibleness of the others; and when we say "day approaches, night comes," we attribute acts to things which are not agents, we affirm propositions, which, logically analysed, have no properly defined subjects. Semi-tangible names, such as sky, earth, belong to the same category. When we say "the earth nourishes man," we do not allude to any well defined portion of the soil, we take the earth as a whole; and the sky is not only the small portion of the horizon grasped by our eyes, our imagination conceives objects not within the ken of our senses, but inasmuch as we look upon the earth or sky as a whole, see in it a power or an ideal, we make of it, involuntarily, an individuality. Now these words had certain terminations affixed to them indicating what we call gender, and became masculine or feminine, the neuter gender at that time did not enter into the language, until thought becoming more lucid perceived it in nature. What was the result? That it was impossible to speak of morning or night, of spring or winter, of dawn or twilight, of sky and earth, without clothing them not only with active and individual characteristics, but with personal and sexual attributes; hence all the objects of discourse as used by the founders of language became necessarily so many actors, as men and women act; and thought, when once launched in this direction, being irresistibly attracted by the tendency towards analogy and metaphor, overspread the whole world of human experience with this method of

representation. What is called animism, anthropomorphism, and personification, have therefore their source in this inevitable dynamic stage, as Max Müller calls it, of thought and language, in which the psychological necessity of representing the external objects as resembling themselves operated on our ancestors. This necessity might have been named subjectivism had it not received more specific terms such as *animism*, which consists in conceiving of inanimate objects as animate; *anthropomorphism*, conceiving objects as men, and *personification*, conceiving objects as persons. As soon as this new mental act was performed, a new world was called into existence, a world of names, or as we now call it, the world of myths.

"So long as the real identity of thought and language had not been grasped, so long as people imagined that language is one thing and thought another, it was but natural that they should fail to see the real meaning of treating mythology, if not as a disease, at all events as an inevitable affection of language. If the active verb was merely a grammatical, and not at the same time a psychological, nay, an historical fact, it might seem absurd to identify the active meaning of our roots with the active meaning ascribed to the phenomena of nature. But let it be once perceived that language and thought are one and indivisible, and nothing will seem more natural than that what, as the grammarian tells us, happened in language, should, as the psychologist tells us, have likewise happened in thought."[1]

The men who spoke in this manner of the external phenomena understood perfectly that they themselves, who struck, who measured, who ran, who rose up, who lay down, were not to be confounded with the thunder, the moon, the river, and the sun; those scholars who studied thought as apart from language, rather allowed themselves to be misled by the phraseology of the time, and

[1] Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 406.

considered it a proof that our Aryan ancestors looked upon their physical surroundings as human beings, endowed with the appropriate organs and acts. Not only had the early Aryans perfectly understood that they were not identical with themselves, but they were far more struck by the differences between them than by any imaginary similarities. The confirmation of this theory is preserved for us in the Veda. "The torrent is roaring—not a bull," *i.e.* like a bull; instead of saying as we do, "firm as a rock," the poets of the Veda would say "firm—not a rock." "The mountains were *not* to be thrown down, but they were *not* warriors," "The fire was eating up the forest, yet it was *not* a lion."

The men of that time used few words; all thoughts that went beyond the narrow horizon of their daily and practical lives had to be expressed by the transference of a name from the object to which it properly belongs to other well known objects. It was the birth of metaphor; it was metaphor that enabled the inner consciousness to project itself into the outer chaos of the world of objects; which it recreated with personal images; and the fact that each natural phenomenon bore many names, and that these same names were used for many other different objects furnished germs of metaphor. Metaphor was to language what rain and sunshine are to the harvest, it multiplies each grain a hundred and a thousand fold; and metaphor in multiplying language disperses it in every direction; without it no language would have progressed beyond the simplest rudiments.

We must be careful not to confuse the radical metaphor with the poetical which we use daily, and which is very different from the former. If we open any book of poetry at whatever page, we shall find inanimate and mute objects described as speaking, rejoicing, praising their Creator; there is no portion of nature however insentient, however incapable of thought, in which we do not infuse our own

sentiments, our own ideas. This mode of expression is especially a poet's prerogative, and that it does not strike us as incongruous is owing to the fact that poetry appeals to the generality of men, and is more natural to them than prose, and that this outpouring of our heart towards nature costs us less effort than to speak of it in the abstract. It requires cold reflection to describe lightning as an electrical discharge, and rain as condensed vapour; in this case it is no longer the transference of the characteristic of a known object to one still unknown, but that of a known object to another equally well known; the poet who transfers the word tear to the dew has already clear names and concepts both for tear and dew; the poetical metaphor is thus a voluntary creative act of our mind, and as such takes no part in the formation of the human mind.

The world was astonished some few years ago by a declaration made by students of the science of language that the 250,000 words comprehended in the English Dictionary now being published at Oxford all proceeded from about 800 roots; and it has now been found possible to reduce this number. In any case 500 to 800 Sanscrit roots, on account of their great fertility, sufficed our Aryan ancestors for all the many words occurring in Sanscrit literature, and suffice also for us who have 245,000 living animals and 95,000 fossil specimens to name; also 100,000 living and 2500 fossil plants, without speaking of crystals, metals and minerals. Another surprising discovery is that every thought that has ever passed through a human brain can be expressed in 121 radical concepts, of which I give a list. It is taken from Max Müller's *Science of Thought*, p. 404. Each single word of every phrase that we use has its origin in one of the 800 roots, and not a thought but proceeds from the 121 fundamental concepts. This is as accepted a fact as that all that is visible on the earth and in the vault of heaven is composed of about 60 elementary substances.

THE 121 ORIGINAL CONCEPTS.

1. Dig.
2. Plait, weave, sew, bind.
3. Crush, pound, destroy, waste, rub, smoothe.
4. Sharpen.
5. Smear, colour, knead, harden.
6. Scratch.
7. Bite, eat.
8. Divide, share, eat.
9. Cut.
10. Gather, observe.
11. Stretch, spread.
12. Mix.
13. Scatter, strew.
14. Sprinkle, drip, wet.
15*a*. Shake, tremble, quiver, flicker.
15*b*. Shake mentally, be angry, abashed, fearful, etc.
16. Throw down, fall.
17. Fall to pieces.
18. Shoot, throw at.
19. Pierce, split.
20. Join, fight, check.
21. Tear.
22. Break, smash.
23. Measure.
24. Blow.
25. Kindle.
26. Milk, yield.
27. Pour, flow, rush.
28. Separate, free, leave, lack.
29. Glean.
30. Choose.
31. Cook, roast, boil.
32. Clean.
33. Wash.
34. Bend, bow.
35. Turn, roll.
36. Press, fix.
37. Squeeze.
38. Drive, thrust.
39. Push, stir, live.
40. Burst, gush, laugh, beam.
41. Dress.
42. Adorn.
43. Strip, remove.
44. Steal.
45. Check.
46. Fill, thrive, swell, grow strong.
47. Cross.
48. Sweeten.
49. Shorten.
50. Thin, suffer.
51. Fat, stick, love.
52. Lick.
53. Suck, nourish.
54. Drink, swell.
55. Swallow, sip.
56. Vomit.
57. Chew, eat.

58. Open, extend.
59. Reach, strive, rule, have.
60. Conquer, take by violence, struggle.
61. Perform, succeed.
62. Attack, hurt.
63. Hide, dive.
64. Cover, embrace.
65. Bear, carry.
66. Can, be strong.
67. Show.
68. Touch.
69. Strike.
70. Ask.
71. Watch, observe.
72. Lead.
73. Set.
74. Hold, wield.
75. Give, yield.
76. Couch.
77. Thirst, dry.
78. Hunger.
79. Yawn.
80. Spue.
81. Fly.
82. Sleep.
83. Bristle, dare.
84. Be angry, harsh.
85. Breathe.
86. Speak.
87. See.
88. Hear.
89. Smell, sniff.
90. Sweat.
91. Seethe, boil.
92. Dance.
93. Leap.
94. Creep.
95. Stumble.
96. Stick.
97. Burn.
98. Dwell.
99. Stand.
100. Sink, lie, fail.
101. Swing.
102. Hang down, lean.
103. Rise up, grow.
104. Sit.
105. Toil.
106. Weary, waste, slacken
107. Rejoice, please.
108. Desire, love.
109. Wake.
110. Fear.
111. Cool, refresh.
112. Stink.
113. Hate.
114. Know.
115. Think.
116. Shine.
117. Run.
118. Move, go.
119*a*. Noise, inarticulate.
119*b*. Noise, musical.
120. Do.
121. Be.

This classification of the roots is purely tentative. It

has been difficult to ascertain what is most likely to have been the original meaning of some; there are certain words of which it is almost impossible to find the etymology. The order in which the concepts succeed each other is not very systematic. Max Müller tried to classify them more correctly by keeping the special acts, such as to dig, the general acts, such as to find, the special states, such as to cough, and the general states, such as to stand—together. But it was impossible to adhere strictly to such a plan, because there are roots which express both acts and states; while in many cases it is difficult to determine whether the special or general meaning predominates; thus there are the words to boil, to make boil, or to be boiling. Some of the roots have closely allied meanings, so that there are as many as fifteen connected with the concepts to burn, and to speak; and many more which can be traced to shine.

We experience feelings at once humbling and elevating when we consider that all we admire, all on which we pride ourselves, our thoughts, whether poetical, philosophical, religious, our whole literature, all our dictionaries, whether scientific or industrial; in fact, our whole intellectual life is built upon this small number of mother-ideas, of 121 concepts. We should feel neither humbled nor elevated; we are making use of the wisdom of our ancestors. It is our duty to transmit the legacy to our descendants which they gave us, but purged from alloy.

Three chief points are to be noted, when we are concerned with the progress of the intellect:—

1. The creative activity of humanity is the basis of all the roots of words.

2. The source of all abstract ideas lies in acts which are entirely material.

3. It has been satisfactorily proved that we speak the language derived from that spoken by our primitive ancestors. It was the custom of Nebuchadnezzar to have

his name stamped on every brick that was used during his reign in erecting his colossal palaces. Those palaces fell to ruins, but from the ruins the ancient materials were carried away for building new cities; and on examining the bricks in the walls of the modern city of Bagdad, travellers have discovered on every one the clear traces of that royal signature. Our modern languages were built up with the materials taken from the ruins of the ancient languages, and every word that we pronounce displays the royal stamp impressed upon it by the founders. The formation of those derived languages, by means of the roots with their successive change of meaning, the construction of their grammatical forms, the continued changes amongst the different dialects, all indicate the presence of a germ in man tending from the first to make him a reasoning being.

CHAPTER VI

ANCIENT LANGUAGE

LANGUAGE may be divided into three distinct periods, when taken as a whole.

The first is, when language, finding itself released from those restraints which enveloped it in its cradle, supplies those words which are most indispensable to man in connecting the one word with others, such as pronouns, prepositions, names of numbers, and of objects of daily use. This must have been the first stage of a language hardly yet agglutinate, free from trammels, with no sign of nationality, or individuality, but containing in itself all the chief features of the many forms belonging to the Turanian, Aryan and Semitic families; the explorer of philosophic antiquity does not penetrate beyond this first period.

The second phase is that in which two linguistic families passing out of the agglutinate stage, unattached as yet to grammatical forms, received once for all the stamp of the formation which we find amongst the popular and modern dialects belonging both to the Semitic and Aryan divisions, and to which they owe this family resemblance, which justifies their inclusion in one or other of these branches of language; on the one side the Teutonic, Celtic, Slav, Italic, Hellenic, Iranian and Indian; on the other Arabic, Armenian and Hebrew; the yet unformed elements of grammar were eventually introduced into these languages at the substitution of the amalgamate for the agglutinate. The Turanian or Ural-Altaic languages have an entirely different character; they preserved for some time—and one or two still retain—the agglutinate form which retards

the development of the grammar, and hides the evidence of relationship to the languages between China and the Pyrenees, and between Cape Comorin and Lapland.

These two periods are followed by a third, generally known as the mythological; it is obscure, and is calculated to shake one's faith in the regular and orderly progress of human reason. We find it to be a phase through which all peoples have passed; yet in using the word mythology our thoughts naturally turn to the mythology of Greece, the only one with which we were made acquainted in our school days, and also the only one with which those were familiar who had not given themselves over specially to the study of the beliefs of antiquity. In the schools this study ran side by side with history; from our earliest days we had been taught the complete polytheism of heathen divinities; our work as pupils was to know our lessons, the work of the masters was to see that we learnt them. Mythology, therefore, was to us only one chapter in that great work, entitled the compulsory course of studies—a chapter which apparently required no more elucidation than the gymnastic lesson.

Our masters represented the Greeks as a people endowed with a vivid imagination, who recounted in exalted pure language most fantastic stories; we read in these authors: "Eos has fled—Eos will return—Eos has returned—Eos wakens the sleepers—Eos lengthens the life of mortals—Eos rises from the sea—Eos is the daughter of the sky—Eos is followed by the sun—Eos is loved by the sun—Eos is killed by the sun," and so on *ad infinitum*; and we were told, "These are myths." As no explanation was given of the word myth, we were none the wiser.

If the movements of Eos are inexplicable, they are not without a certain picturesqueness. But what shall we say of the myth concerning Saturn, who, on account of a prediction that he would be killed by his children, swallowed

them as soon as they were born, with the exception of Jupiter, who was saved by the substitution of a stone, which Saturn afterwards brought up with the children he had swallowed. Or again, what can be said of the feast offered to the gods by Tantalus to test their omniscience; he caused the members of the body of his son Pelops to be mixed with other meats; a shoulder was eaten before Jupiter discovered the deception; he ordered the remainder to be thrown into a copper from which Pelops emerged alive with one shoulder lacking, and one made of ivory was given to him. Can anything more grotesque be imagined? And our children are subjected to this regimen, and their memories charged with these fables, under the pretext that they will the better appreciate the *chefs-d'œuvre* of classical literature.

The enigmatical part of this period of language will be more evident if we examine the early traditional history which began at its close, and at which time a light appeared in Greece destined to flood the world with a splendour hitherto unknown; it was the epoch which produced Thales, Pythagoras and Heraclitus, who, in the midst of much ignorance, had thoughts of wonderful lucidity. A national literature was beginning, where we find indications of the germs of political societies; the creation of laws, and the development of morals. And we ask ourselves: Whence come these sages? Who were their masters? How could these glorious days of Greek civilisation have been preceded by several generations whose principal occupation seemed to consist in inventing and repeating to satiety absurd fables concerning gods, heroes, and other beings whom no human being had ever seen; which fables contravene the simplest principles of logic, morality and religion? The ancient sages themselves were harsh in their judgment of these revolting stories contained in Grecian mythology; Xenophanes, a contemporary of Pythagoras, considered Hesiod

and Homer responsible for these superstitions, and blamed them for attributing to the gods all that was most reprehensible in man. Heraclitus was of opinion that Homer deserved to be banished from the public assemblies, and Plato wrote, "Mothers and nurses tell their children stories full of misstatements and immoralities which are gathered from the poets."

Thus spoke philosophers 500 years before our era, because they knew that if the "gods commit anything that is evil they are no gods."

"Taken by themselves and in their literal meaning, most of these ancient myths are absurd and irrational, and frequently opposed to the principles of thought, religion, and morality which guided the Greeks as soon as they appear to us in the twilight of traditional history."[1]

Many explanations have been sought to account in a rational manner for these strange tales; writers have striven to discover what can have given rise to such ridiculous inventions; some have asserted that it was the intention of the authors of mythology to convey to the people a knowledge of certain facts of nature, and certain moral truths whilst clothing them in allegorical form, and by endowing the divinities with certain virtues which it would become men to imitate and acquire; and that the worship of these divinities was instituted that man might be more fully impressed, that the likeness of the virtues upheld might be more deeply engraved in the heart of the pious worshipper. Zeus, was mind; Athene, art; Hercules, energy and perseverance in labours of great difficulty; whilst the Homeric heroes, Agamemnon, Achilles, and Hector represented physical activities. According to another theory the object with which the myths were composed was political, the laws of government were supposed to emanate from the gods; and whoso refused to recognise the excellence of the institutions of the

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 11. Max Müller.

country was held to be in revolt against the gods themselves. The philosopher Euhemerus was the author of a third theory, called the historical; he represented the mythological personages not as gods, but as kings, heroes, and philosophers, who, after their death, had received divine honours among their fellow men; in this system Eolus, the god of the winds, became a skilful mariner who could foretell atmospheric changes; Atlas, supporting the sky and earth on his wide shoulders, had been formerly a great astronomer; Jupiter, a ruler of Crete; Hercules, a knight-errant. Although these ancient writers interpreted the fables in so many different ways, they all agreed in denying that an atom of truth is found in these stories concerning the gods, and they insisted that no myth must be taken *au pied de la lettre*. At a later period it was thought that reminiscences of a barbaric age could be found in which the ancestors of the Greeks apparently occupied themselves by stealing, killing, deceiving, and eating their offspring. "Lactantius, St Augustine, and the first missionaries, in their attacks on the religious belief of the Greeks, and Romans availed themselves of these arguments of Euhemerus, and taunted them with worshipping gods that were no gods, but known and admitted to have been merely deified mortals."[1] In later times the same theory was revived; certain theologians, rather lacking in penetration, looked to Greek mythology for traces of sacred personages, they imagined that they could recognise in Saturn and his three sons, Jupiter, Neptune, and Pluto, the features of Noah and his sons, Ham, Japhet, and Shem; and in a recently published book the author suggests that when Hesiod describes the garden of the Hesperides, we have a tradition of the garden of Eden.

Thus from the moment when, for the first time, the ancient philosophers questioned "why?" from the time of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, to our own practical

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Language*, vol. ii. p. 436.

and matter-of-fact century, mythology has not ceased to compel attention, and to furnish endless matter of conjecture. Learned writers have sought in physical sciences, history, and metaphysics, an explanation of this phenomenon; but in spite of this vast labour inspired by a love of science, and carried on for more than two thousand years, the secret of the sphinx of mythology remains undisclosed, and we still ask, "what is mythology?" Is it an invention of Homer and Hesiod? Or is it a phase in the development of the human mind, a deviation in the growth of reason?

The school of philology has a solution of its own to offer; will it be as futile as the others? After hearing it shall we still say the Sphinx is mute? This school takes upon itself to assert that the explanation of the mystery can only be found in the Science of Language. It is a fact that the history of language—which is the history of the human mind—enables us to answer the preceding questions categorically. Yes. Mythology was inevitable, an inherent part of language itself, to be considered, not as a simple external symbol, but as the only incorporation of thought possible. Mythology, in the widest acceptation of the term, is the shadow which language casts on thought; and the whole history of philosophy from Thales to Hegel has been one uninterrupted struggle with mythology, a constant protest between thought and language.

CHAPTER VII

MYTHS

In order to appreciate truly our neighbour's impressions and points of view, we must constantly detach ourselves from our own special way of seeing and feeling; this habit of abstraction—which is most difficult to every one—is indispensable when we are endeavouring to understand the natures of persons who lived many thousands of years ago, and who thought and spoke in a totally different manner from ourselves.

In seeking to grasp the phraseology of myths we perceive that its chief elements consist in a repetition of phrases in which the acts of nature are used as embodiments of the idea, under the figures of day and night, dawn and twilight, the sun and the moon, the heavens and the earth, as they stand in relation to man.

When we in the present century speak of the last hours of the day, we use precise and exact terms; we say, "It is late; the sun is setting; the moon rises; it is night." Our ancestors also had occasion to mention these same hours, but as they did not speak of the facts of nature without investing them with some of their own personality, they preferred to say, "Dawn flies before the sun." "The sun loves—pursues—embraces the dawn." "She dies in the arms of the sun." They spoke of the sun growing old—decaying—dying. Besides these general terms our ancestors used special designations, which the nature of their language suggested; the hymns of the Rig-Veda supply instances. One of these modes of speech it would be difficult for me to render in French, but the English

language has the impersonal verb which will illustrate my meaning, for all such atmospheric phenomena such as rain, thunder, the light of day; instead of *it* rains, *it* thunders, *it* shines, our ancestors said, *he* rains, *he* thunders, *he* shines, without knowing who was this *he*, who for us is the third person masculine; but, naturally for them, *he* meant the rainer, the thunderer, the lightener, or, in other words—the agent.

Mythology, taken in its entirety, is the outcome of myths which preceded it. If the original meaning of the Greek word Logos—as both word and thought—has revealed to us a forgotten truth; the original meaning of *mythos* is also indispensable for the study of mythology. This Greek term means simply *word* as opposed to *deed*, and hardly differed at first from Logos. Afterwards, however, a distinction was made between myth,—a fable, a story, and logos, a historical account. Thus a myth was at first a word. Almost all terms used in the first spontaneous stage of language had for their basis striking metaphors, whose signification may have been forgotten, and these terms having lost their original as well as poetical meaning, remained words only, current in familiar conversation.

I give the following myths as they have come down to us.

Endymion is the son of Zeus and Kalyke, but he is also the son of Æthlios, a king of Elis, who is himself called a son of Zeus; for, according to Greek customs, the reigning race of Elis derived its origin from the king of the gods. Endymion is one of the many names of the sun, but with special reference to the setting or dying sun; it is derived from a verb which originally meant *to dive into*; an expression such as "the sun dived" presupposes an earlier conception, that it dived into the sea. But the verb *enduo* is never used in classical Greek for setting, because the simple verb *duo* had become the technical term for sunset.

Thus this myth of Endymion owes its origin to the use probably of *enduo* in some Greek dialect, though not the commonly received term for sunset. The original meaning of Endymion being once forgotten, what was told originally of the setting sun was now told of a name, which in order to have any meaning, had to be changed into a god or hero.

This handsome prince or shepherd, according to the different versions of the tale, went to Karia, where on Mount Latmos he had strange adventures; he slept in a cave to which the rays of the moon, Selene, penetrated, and in the ancient poetical and proverbial language of Elis it was said, "Selene loves and watches Endymion; Selene embraces Endymion and kisses him into sleep." The name Selene is so transparent that the word moon pierces through it; we should have guessed that the moon was intended, even if tradition had only preserved her other name, Asterodia—"wanderer amongst the stars"; the names Hecate or Lucina do not force us to acknowledge their fitness, they present to our imagination a totally different figure (as they suggest opaqueness) from Selene. Learned writers at times still put forward the explanation with regard to mythology that it "was a past which was never a present," but this myth of Endymion was "present" with the people of Elis at the period of its narration.

These and similar expressions were repeated long after their meaning had ceased to be understood; and as the human mind is generally as anxious for a reason as ready to invent one, the poets added to this story several details, and reasons why Endymion sank into eternal sleep after a life of but one day; and if allusions were made to these by a popular poet, it became a mythological fact, repeated and embellished by later poets.

The construction of such a name as Eos does not differ materially from that of any other name, but as all roots

expressed at the first denote action, it follows that for all an agent must be found; the name of Eos in Sanscrit is Ushas, dawn, or "the bright one" from the root Vas, to shine; thus Eos meant originally "he or she shines." But who was "he" or "she"? Thus the inevitable myth is evolved. For us the dawn is only the natural illumination of the sky, the brightness of the morning; our ancestors received a different impression by the break of day. After having coined a word meaning "he or she shines," that is the light, or Eos, the Greeks continued to portray each step of Eos as she preceded the appearance of the sun on the celestial vault; "Eos is followed by the sun—is loved by the sun"; she is conceived as a bright and beautiful woman; if she appeared veiled in clouds, she would be considered as a veiled bride; thus the epithets and relationships showered on Eos become intelligible, she is the daughter of Hyperion, thus her father would be the high heaven, since *hyper* corresponds to the Latin *super*; she is the sister of Helios and Selene, the sun and the moon. As soon as a name such as Eos was first enunciated and used in daily conversation, it grew and gathered new materials round itself; all the names surrounding Eos in Greek and Aurora in Latin show us how inevitably what we call mythology springs up from the soil of language. Even such simple sentences as "Eos appears, disappears, or dies" are changed at once into myth, fable, and legend, and it soon becomes impossible to draw a line between what is simple language and what is myth.

We do not unfortunately always possess the original form of each legend as it first passed from mouth to mouth in the towns and country; thus our chief sources are the ancient chroniclers, who took mythology for history, and used only so much of it as answered their purpose, and these accounts do not reach us at first hand.

We find a legend in Greek mythology which has much

exercised the learned; the nymph Daphne flies before Phœbus Apollo, her mother, the earth, moved by compassion, takes her to her bosom, and immediately a laurel appears and fills the abyss into which Daphne had vanished. The mythologists asked themselves what could be the meaning of this; the more phlegmatic amongst them considered that it had no special meaning at all, but was simply to be looked upon as a fable; why seek further for a hidden import? Why? Because people do not relate such stories concerning their gods and heroes without some good motive.

In the legend of Endymion the Greek language supplies all that is needed to make it intelligible, but there are many instances of the difficulty, or even the impossibility of explaining certain Greek names by the help of Greek only; since a name is not converted into a myth until its original meaning has become obscured in the language which gave it birth, though still perfectly comprehensible in another of the same family, it behoves the classical philologist to surrender all etymological researches of this nature to the comparative philologist, whose privilege it is to seek to discover the signification of a Greek word by confronting it with contemporary witnesses from the German, Celtic, or Sanscrit. In the Teutonic languages, for instance, day has several names which are derived from the root *dah*, to burn, to be hot; and this same root has also given rise to the Greek name for dawn. In Sanscrit it is called Ahana, from *ahan* or *dahan*, the root of which is *ah*; *dah* and *dahan* may have lost their initial *d*, or this letter may have been added to the root *ah*; these gains and losses are met with frequently.

The Sanscrit name Ahana, known before Greek and Sanscrit became separated, occurs but once in a hymn of the Rig-Veda; in India this mythological germ withered away, and even the name Ahana would not have survived, but for this single verse which saved it from oblivion; but

it developed into a splendid growth in Greece, in the legend of Eos, which I have quoted.

In this hymn addressed to Ushas we read: "We have crossed the frontier of this darkness; Ahana shining forth gives light, lighting up all the world, awakening mortals to walk about—she received praise from every thinker." Ahana rises from the head of Dyu, the forehead of the sky; she shows herself in the east, she advances and awakens the sleepers. In Sanscrit *budh* means to wake and to know, but light in Sanscrit has again a double meaning, and means knowledge, much more frequently and distinctly than light; this explains how Ahana, in awakening mortals, causes persons to know.

The stories of Daphne and of Ahana are closely allied, and the one explains the other. As long as we remain ignorant of the fact that at first Daphne and Aurora were one, this myth is inexplicable; but turn the name Ahana into Greek, and you have the Dawn in the features of a nymph loved by Apollo, and dying when the bright sun touched her with his rays.

But why, it may be asked, was Daphne supposed to have been changed into a laurel-tree? The dawn was called daphne, the burning; so was the laurel—as wood that burns easily, and whose flame throws a bright light—two different objects, but alike under one aspect, though two distinct acts. The root *dah* is found in daphne for laurel equally with Daphne, dawn, the synonymy of the two names producing the myth of Daphne. Although this legend first came to life on Greek soil, it would have been unintelligible without the help of the Veda, as the later Sanscrit supplied no key to it.

The Sanscrit root *Ah* is also the germ of the name of Athena, the termination of the name corresponding to Ahana; Athene is said to spring from the head of Zeus. This extraordinary birth, though post-Homeric, is no doubt of ancient date, since it repeats exactly the birth of Ahana.

The Hellenists maintain that the Greeks were unconscious that the word Athene meant the dawn; doubtless few amongst them knew that Zeus originally meant the surface or forehead of the sky. It is also true that when the people of Athens worshipped Athene as their tutelary deity, she became something very different from the Indian Ushas; but if we notice carefully all the many and various ideas concerning this Greek goddess, we shall be led to the supposition that her cradle was no other than that of the dawn, namely, the east, the forehead of the sky, or Zeus. Neither in the Veda, nor in Homer, is there any mention of the mother of the dawn, although both mention *her parents.*

It is a curious fact that in the mythology of Italy, Minerva, who was identical with Athene, should from the beginning have assumed a name apparently expressive of the intellectual rather than the physical character of the Dawn-goddess. Minerva or Menerva is clearly connected with *mens,* the Greek *menos,* the Sanscrit *manas,* mind; *mane* in Latin is morning; *manare* is specially used of the rising sun; and *matuta,* another name of the same category, is the Dawn. The root *man,* which in all Aryan languages means thought, was at a very early time, like the Sanscrit *budh,* destined to express the revived consciousness of the whole of nature at the approach of the light of the morning. The equation Ahane = Athene is both phonetically and mythologically irreproachable, the correlative Minerva can also be explained mythologically.

To reject the explanations of these myths which Comparative Philology furnishes, it would be necessary to prove that Ahana and Eos do not mean the dawn, that Athene does not correspond with Ahana, and that Helios is not the sun.

Mythologists have sometimes failed to discover the primitive character of certain myths, because they have not looked beyond the Greek etymology. The word

Erinnys, "hovering in the gloom," corresponds exactly to the Sanscrit Saranyû = "break of day." Poets sometimes speak of the Dawn as avenging the crimes committed in the dark; the myth of Erinnys denotes this same idea. Instead of our lifeless and abstract expression, "A crime is sure to be discovered," the old proverbial and poetical saying amongst the Greeks and Hindoos was, Erinnys—Saranyû, "will bring misdeeds to light." At first this phrase was free from all mythological taint, but it was afterwards transformed into a myth by the Greeks, as they were ignorant of the true signification of the name of Erinnys.

When the mythology of Greece fails to furnish an explanation of many of the Greek phrases, because it belongs to a later date than the classical period, the Veda may then be questioned, and will supply us with the information, by disclosing an ancient substratum of human thought, such as existed amongst the inhabitants of one of the most important regions of the world, India. It is with as much pleasure as assurance that we repeat to those learned scholars, who decline to open their eyes in order to see, or see only what they consider should be there, the Brahmanic saying, "It is not the fault of the post that the blind man passes it without noticing it."

It seems astonishing that a people so richly endowed as the Greeks should have found pleasure in romancing so constantly concerning the sun and the moon, the day and the night, the dawn and the twilight; but the custom of repeating these mythological phrases, which much resembled each other, dated from an epoch before the Greeks, when nothing more powerfully attracted and fascinated the imagination of man than the aspect of nature's forces, especially the return of the sun, bringing with it each morning light and heat and life. Repeated thus incessantly these phrases became idiomatic, and were retold long after the thread connecting them with the simple facts of nature

was broken and lost to memory. At first some old grandmother would repeat them, partly understanding them in their true natural sense, and partly metaphorically; the sons of the old people would repeat them with a partial understanding; but the grandsons would relate them only for their peculiarities, or for the charm of their style and setting; and the great-grandchildren would hand them on at random, with no comprehension of their meaning. At a much later period when all these sayings, with no connection between them, had become traditional, the poets would embody them in verse, giving them their first form and permanence in a cycle of legends. They congratulated themselves on the treasure-trove, but marvelled that the Greeks should enclose these bald phrases of perpetual iteration in the casket of their literature. They might as well ask why the Greeks apparently sanctioned all the irregular verbs their language holds by retaining them in their grammar. Is it not a historical fact that cannot be denied that the whole Aryan peoples, without exception, have conserved as the heritage of their common origin not only the names of their divinities, their legends, and their folk-lore, but also remains of their primitive language. Here is a noteworthy statement. Comparative Philology has proved that there is nothing really irregular in a language, and that what was formerly considered so in declensions and conjugations is the stratum on which the edifice of each language raised itself progressively. This same apparent irregularity is found also in mythology, because it is itself only a sort of dialect or offshoot of language.

Since the *raison d'être* of myths, as such, is a forgetfulness of the original sense of the words, we cannot hope to be able to explain all the mythological recitals; no one has more clearly stated the difficulty, nor expressed it with greater modesty, than he who has laid the most lasting foundation of comparative mythology. Grimm

says: "I shall indeed interpret all that I can, but I cannot interpret all that I should like."[1]

In examining these archives, which, if only on account of their antiquity, are very superior to any other evidence for our purpose, we learn that identification differs from comparison. It is only possible to identify two or more divinities by seeing if one name applies equally to all, and by showing that this name denotes the essence of each; this result is obtained when, for instance, we note a general resemblance between a god or a hero of the Veda, and a god or hero of Hesiod, and discover that though their names may be phonetically dissimilar, yet that they have one source. Uranus, in the language of Hesiod, is used as a name for the sky—"a firm place for the blessed gods"; and the poet says that Uranus covers everything, and that when he brings the night he is stretched out, everywhere embracing the earth. This sounds like a reproduction of the name of Varuna, which is derived from a root *Var*, to cover (the Sanscrit term *varutra*, overcoat, would prove this if need be). The name Uranus in the Greek apparently retains something of its primitive meaning, which is not the case with the name of Zeus and Apollo. Varuna and Uranus evidently both express the same mythological concept, that of the covering, enclosing sky; this may even be one of the most ancient discoveries of comparative mythology. In the same way we prove that Ushas, Eos, Daphne, Ahana, and Athene were five names of the dawn, and that they can be traced back to a time before Greek and Sanscrit were separated. Thus, whilst one legend becomes differentiated from another by its own peculiar form and attributes, the name of its original prototype remains etymologically the same, though taking varying forms amongst the various peoples who use the legend; it is in this immutable name that the continuity of ideas lies, which nothing

[1] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. ii. p. 70.

obliterates, and which traverses the centuries, and connects the mythologies of countries as totally distinct as India, Greece, and Ireland. But we must remember that all that is taken for etymology is not always so; the explanations which Homer gives of the names of the divinities only proves that at his time the original meaning had been forgotten. To us who now know the true principles of mythology, it is clear that it represents a prehistoric period of language, and the light it throws on the times that followed, has the same importance with regard to the study of the human mind, that geology and paleontology have for the knowledge of the earth.

Sometimes we come upon difficulties of another kind when we seek to translate the language of the poets into our modern forms of thought and speech. In consequence of the absence of merely auxiliary words in mythological language, each word, whether noun or verb, had its full original power, it was heavy and unwieldy, it said more than it ought to say. Here is an example: *Nyx* (night), the mother of *Moros* (fate), of *Ker* (destruction), of *Thanatos* (death), of *Hypnos* (sleep), and of the *Oneïroi* (dreams), and these,—her progeny, *Night* is said, by the poet, to have borne without a father. She has also other children: *Momos* (blame), *Oizys* (woe), the *Hesperides*, which are the evening stars, *Nemesis* (vengeance), *Apate* (fraud), *Philotes* (lust), *Geras* (old age), and *Eris* (strife). Now let us use our modern expressions. "The stars are seen as the night approaches," "we sleep, we dream, we die," "we run into danger during night," "nightly revels lead to strife, angry discussions, and woe," "many nights bring old age, and at last death," "an evil deed concealed at first by the darkness of night will at last be revealed by the day," "night herself will be revenged on the criminal"; and we have translated the language of Hesiod, a language to a great extent understood by the people to whom it was addressed many hundreds of years

ago, and it is made comprehensible to us by the addition of some auxiliary words. This is hardly mythological language, but rather a poetical and proverbial kind of expression known to all poets whether modern or ancient, and frequently to be found in the language of common people when it becomes proverbial.

"In Greece the mortal element, inherent in all gods, was eliminated to a great extent by the conception of heroes. Whatever was too human in the ancient legends told of Zeus and Apollo was transferred to so-called half gods or heroes, who were represented as the sons or favourites of the gods. The two-fold character of Herakles as a god and as a hero is acknowledged even by Herodotus, and some of his epithets would have been sufficient to indicate his solar and originally divine character. But in order to make some of the legends told of the solar deity possible or conceivable, it was necessary to represent Herakles as a more human being, and to make him rise to the seat of the immortals only after he had endured toils and sufferings incompatible with the dignity of an Olympian god."[1] The divinities of a second and third order, who were sometimes solicited for special favours, were perhaps placed in the same category as some provincial or local saints, who were considered more accessible and more pitiful in certain places, just as some physicians make a practice of curing those ills only of which they had made a speciality.

There were also abstract divinities, representing certain virtues in the eyes of the people, which were highly esteemed and useful to possess; each of these qualities which were conceived separately, and considered in the superlative degree, were from that time raised to the rank of a divine person, thus altars and temples were dedicated to Courage, Strength, and Piety; Fame was likewise thus honoured. "Great Fame is never lost though scattered abroad," said Hesiod, "it is in itself a divinity."

[1] Max Müller, *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 243.

The language of mythology was in use at a late period. History tells us that the Greek town of Cyrene in Libya was founded about the thirty-seventh Olympiad, the ruling race came from Thessaly; the foundation of the colony was due to the oracle of Apollo at Pytho. This simple historical fact has been thus rendered, from the habit of not recounting events as they happened. "The heroic maid Cyrene, who lived in Thessaly, was loved by Apollo, and carried off to Libya."

The question has been often asked, what can be the origin of the fables which are identical in character and form, whether we find them on Indian, Greek, Italian, Persian, Slavonic, Celtic, or Teutonic soil. Was there a period of temporary insanity, through which the human mind had to pass, and was it a madness identically the same in the south of India and in the north of Ireland? The necessity of solving this problem became more imperative when collections of these ancient traditions were brought from countries which formerly were almost unknown to us; incredible tales came from all parts, from amongst the Hottentots, the Patagonians, Zulus, Esquimaux, and Mongols; in all cases we were able to recognise the fables with which we were already so well acquainted, from having seen them in Aryan literature. When Max Müller first published his essays on the Greek myths, the mythologists acknowleged generally that it was very natural he should devote so much time to the explanation of the Greek legends, since these same stories had been universally found in all parts of the globe, from the one pole to the other; stories of men and women turned into trees, trees transformed into men, men behaving as animals, animals talking as if they were men, men swallowed by gods and brought up again whole, as were the children of Kronos; in all places the same adventures were told of the sun and moon, also swallowed, but the swallower not known. The Greek myths—so it was asserted by the

learned who did not care to abandon the old paths—form only one page of that vast mythology created by the disordered imagination of nations in their infancy; the epidemic was general, and it is useless to seek for a definite or peculiar meaning in such and such a local myth.

Nevertheless, in presence of these striking likenesses, impartial and clear-sighted science recognised that there must be something in the human mind that of necessity tended to mythology, nay, that there must be some reason in all the unreason that goes by the name of myth. That "something" Max Müller discovered to be language, in its natural progress from roots to words, up to definite and special names. Mythology has now been acknowledged to be an inevitable phase in the growth of language and thought; a form of expression which changes non-personal beings into personal, and all relationships into actions; it is a mental phenomenon so peculiar that it would be difficult to avoid the admission that it emanated from a distinct stratum, it is metaphoric language and thought; and it is the duty of the geologist of language to establish the authenticity of this epoch of organic life in humanity, which is contemporaneous with the most ancient forms of language.

If Hegel compares the discovery of the common origin of Greek and Sanscrit to that of a new world, the same may be said with regard to the common origin of all the mythologies, for already the science of Comparative Mythology has risen to the same importance as Comparative Philology.

The supposition that grammatical gender of nouns must necessarily be the cause of personification, and produce myths which had no previous existence at the time when this denotation of sex did not yet exist, has been proved incorrect. But the following fact, which concerns language more than mythology, is not so evident at first sight, viz., that however the various languages may differ externally,

and however they may lack gender, yet they have without exception what is analogous to it, and takes its place; this is a system of fundamental classification to which all equally submit, and which each language supplies; the result is that at the foundation of thought common to all humanity, certain forms are found answering the purpose of gender. Each myth and each legend was at first the intelligible expression of an intelligible thought, and as the thought contained in each recital must evidently be the same wherever there were men to repeat it, the science of Comparative Mythology seeks to place its hand on the expression which best renders this one and the self-same thought, under different aspects.

What is commonly called Hindoo mythology is of little or no avail for comparative purposes, because nothing is systematically arranged. Names are used in one hymn of the Rig-Veda as appellatives, in another as names of gods. There are as yet no genealogies, and no recorded marriages between gods and goddesses. As the conception of the poet varied, so varied the nature of these gods; the myths are arranged with little order. Nowhere is the wide distance which separates the ancient poems of India from the most ancient literature of Greece more clearly felt than when we compare the growing myths of the Veda with the full-grown, or already decaying myths on which the poetry of Homer is founded. The Veda is the real theogony of the Aryan races, while that of Hesiod is a copy only of the original image. The Hindoo Rishis differed much amongst themselves in their representation of things; some of them attributed the dispersion of clouds by a solar hero, to the will of some supreme or divine being; others considered the combatants to be the supreme beings themselves, who dispersed the clouds full of lightning and thunder, making the sky serene after the fight. These are the two distinct interpretations of the solar and atmospheric schools; the dualism in nature,

which at a later period took the character of light and darkness, even of good and evil, was at the beginning the dualism of day and night, spring and winter, life and death, represented by the two great luminaries of the physical world.

The characteristic traits of the moon which made the deepest impression on our ancestors were its increase, and afterwards its gradual diminution, until its total disappearance. The eclipses, though filling the minds of the people with sudden fear at first, did not continue long to awaken dread or curiosity, as they were of rare occurrence and transitory; the moon, it was thought, was swallowed and afterwards disgorged by some hostile power; but the monthly increase and diminution required some other explanation. The Hindoos, in seeking to discover the abode of the gods and of their own ancestors, assigned the brilliant sky to the former, and where, therefore, should the Fathers live if not in the vast vault and in the moon? This was, in fact, the belief of the whole Aryan race. But the subject is complicated, since in an earlier period of lunar mythology, we find in the Vedic Pantheon a divinity of the name of Soma, which certain poets identify with the plant of that name, whose intoxicating juice played an important part in the sacrifices; there is no doubt a great obscurity with regard to these two rival powers, to which the same name had been given, and on which mythologists have found it difficult to enlighten us; but quite recently exponents of the Rig-Veda have discovered that Soma originally meant the moon itself, thus the Rishis allow it to be apparent in their hymns that there were at one time two Somas—the plant and its juice, and at an earlier period the other Soma, known only to the old Brahmans, which was the moon. A belief held by the Hindoos was that the moon supplied nourishment to the gods, which was the cause of the diminution; its increase was explained by the entrance into it of the souls of their ancestors; the

gods swallowing these also as an integral portion of the moon.

All these ideas were of slow development, and of successive growth; no portion of mythology had a systematic elaboration.

I will add as a curious scientific fact, that lately botanists have sought in vain in Northern India and in Persia for a plant whose qualities correspond to those of the Soma as described in the Vedic hymns; they are more or less agreed that it must be akin to the *Ephedra*, but as this plant abounded in the whole country between Siberia and the Iberian Peninsula, there was no hope of discovering the locality of the Aryans by means of the habitat of the plant.

It has been often asserted that these stories of men and things that have been swallowed must have come from countries formerly inhabited by cannibals; learned writers, even Herbert Spencer—to quote one instance—consider, not without some appearance of reason, that Hindoos, Greeks, Romans and Germans could hardly have put forth similar stories of this kind had there been no foundation in fact. But the verbs to eat, to swallow, will admit of divers interpretations; we say of a man that it was impossible for him to swallow such an insult, or that he has consumed his fortune; and this mode of speech surprises no one; where we speak of an eclipse, the inhabitants of the shores of the Baltic say that the moon or sun is in the act of being eaten; in India instead of saying such an one has been flogged, it would be said, he has tasted the whip. A little reflection will convince us that if nations who had nothing in common but human nature, spoke of the night as covering, hiding, swallowing various beings, especially the sun and the day, it was not more unreasonable on their part than to say, as we do, that day and night follow each other, instead of expressing ourselves after a more scientific manner, and not less

correctly, in saying that day and night are the successive effects of the rotation of the earth on its axis.

Having discovered that mythological phraseology was sometimes due to misconceptions of names, and that poetical fantasies had their share, philologists quoted an instance of the imagination being misled by a simple mistake; that of the name "Great Bear" being given to a certain group of stars. The Sanscrit root *Ark* signified to brighten, to praise, to glorify, to celebrate; man praised, glorified, celebrated the sun, moon and stars; for these purposes the word *Ark* was used. For all we know the substantive *rik* may really have conveyed all these meanings during the earliest period of the Aryan language; but if we look at the fully developed branches of that family of speech, we find that in this, its simplest form, *rik* has been divested of all meaning in the Rig-Veda except one; it only means a song of praise, a hymn, that gladdens the heart of man, and brightens the countenance of the gods. The other words, however, which *rik* might have expressed were not entirely given up, but the root was rendered more definite; thus *arki* and *arkis* were formed, these no longer meant hymns of praise, but light, ray. It is difficult to understand how *Riksha*, in the sense of bright, has become the name of "the bear"; might it not be on account of his brilliant tawny fur, or from his bright eyes? No one knows. Certain it is that in Sanscrit bears were called *Riksha*. But the word *Riksha* had also another meaning, as shown by a passage in the Rig-Veda 1, 24, 10. "These stars (riksha) fixed high above, which are seen by night; whither did they go by day?" The Commentator observed that the word *riksha* is not used in the sense of stars in general, but that according to tradition the name is only given to that particular constellation, which in later Sanscrit is called "the Seven Rishis," or "the Seven Sages." And thus it happened that when the dispersion took place,

and the Aryans left their primitive home and settled in Europe, they ceased to use the plural form "*Arktoi*," or many bears, and spoke of the group of seven stars as the Bear, the Great Bear, without knowing why these stars had originally received that name.

It did not escape the notice even of the less erudite that the gods of Greece and Rome and of other Aryan nations had a close connection with the most striking phenomena of nature; they also recognised the same origin amongst the divinities of the Semitic nations, as well as those of Egypt, Africa and America; this could, of course, be accounted for by the presence of the same primitive stratum of human thought, resembling those deeper geological layers, which only show themselves in a partial and fragmentary manner.

But none of these mythologists attached the least importance to the *names* of the divinities, and if they were told that they were nothing but names, it sounded almost like heresy to them, and they ignored the fact that one of the latest scientific discoveries was being submitted to them. Yet it is indubitable that the sun and the moon were in the places occupied by them at present before they were named; but not till they were named was there a Savitar, a Helios, a Selene or a Mene. If then it is the name which makes the gods in mythology, in enabling us to distinguish one from another, it follows that we must call the Science of Language to our aid in order to solve the problem of mythology, since that alone discloses the causes which have despoiled the names of their primitive meaning, and that alone shows how the germs of decrepitude, inherent in language, affect both the phonetic portion and also the signification of words, since words naturally react on thought and mould it.

CHAPTER VIII

BETWEEN SLEEPING AND WAKING

THE habit which I have contracted of living in the society of our ancestors of prehistoric times, would, it might be thought, naturally cause me to notice the dissimilarities between us and them rather than the likenesses; this often happens, but not always. Our fathers, for instance, did not know the thousandth part of our vocabulary, which is very copious; this would seem to indicate that our knowledge has considerably increased in the course of thirty or forty centuries. Words of deep import are familiar to us; who amongst us does not know and use such as these—Law, Necessity, Liberty, Spirit, Matter, Conscience, Belief, Nature, Providence, Revelation, Inspiration, the Soul, Religion, Infinite, Immortality, and many others, which are either of recent origin, or have become new because their meaning has changed? Here the difference between our fathers and ourselves springs into sight.

But the points of resemblance are still more striking.

Long before our present era, certain philosophers asserted that their world was full of gods, we may say with equal truth that God fills our world; His name is in every mouth, and our little children know it well. Moreover the complete identity between certain mental acts of our fathers and our own is easily recognised. Our fathers were satisfied not to enquire concerning the nature of their gods, they knew their names, and that sufficed. We too have become accustomed to hear God's name repeated frequently, without always questioning ourselves as to its

meaning, and in what way He has made the earth His habitation.

To talk of what we do not grasp must be essentially human, since we find the practice in two social conditions, separated from each other by thousands of years.

It is incredible to what a point we of the nineteenth century carry our lack of enquiry. If one day we were to count on our fingers the number of interesting subjects we had allowed to pass by us without any interrogations concerning them, fifty hands would not suffice us for the tale; our ignorance would then become apparent. Should we feel humiliated? In all probability no, for before arriving at this much to be desired consummation, we should have been carried away by many thoughts in no way bearing on the subject, and the one thought which would come prominently to the front and hinder us from passing our conduct in review would be, "I see no necessity to apply myself to them." In fact, nothing is easier and nothing so reposeful to our mind as acquiescence in the popular opinion, which we allow to guide us in our estimation of words and phrases; as so frequently happens with ourselves (by "ourselves" I mean that very considerable portion of society which separates the working classes from the savants and philosophers).

"All things are full of the gods," was said by the heathen in former days; and in fact divinities abounded; this was not surprising. 'God has chosen to Himself a people and spread His name over the whole earth, and to make His will to be known," as we say now. Thus we know that God is, and that His commandments must be kept.

To consider words as ideas is not wise. Why do we not imitate the savages who when they hear an organ for the first time have a great desire to open it in order to see what is inside; and we who are civilised play with much light-hearted readiness on the gigantic instrument of language without seeking to know the value of the sounds

we draw from it; and the names of beings and objects which should exercise the most powerful influence to which moral things can be subjected, are treated as mere sounds.

Have we asked ourselves the meaning of the word God? Many must answer no to this question. This is not well, in spite of the fact that those who have asked it in this form have not always succeeded in obtaining an answer; no one has formed a complete conception of God, since neither sense nor reason is equal to the task. Plato, although named "Divine" by the ancient philosophers and by Christian theologians, did not like to speak of *The Gods*, but replacing the plural by the singular used the word "Divine," but he did not explain what he understood by this word. Plato certainly mentions the Creator of the Universe, the Father of humanity, but—"he does not tell His name, for he knew it not; he does not tell His colour, for he said it not; he does not tell His size, for he touched it not."[1] Xenophanes, who lived 300 years before Plato, said, "There is one God, the greatest amongst gods and men; neither in form nor in thought like unto mortals."[2]

The Greek philosophers protested against all attempts to apply a name which should be adequate to the Supreme Being; since all the words chosen failed to grasp His essence, and only designated certain sides and points of view, predicting of Him whatever was most beautiful in nature. For this reason early Christian writers who were Greeks rather than Jews, who had studied in the schools of Plato and Aristotle, spoke of God in the same abstract language, the same negative terms; they said, "We cannot call Him Light, since Light is His creation; we cannot call Him Spirit, since the Spirit is His breath; nor Wisdom, since Wisdom emanates from Him; nor Force, since Force is the manifestation of His Power."

[1] Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 100. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 181.

Thus instead of saying what God is, the philosophers, heathen as well as Christian, prefer to say what He is not. But in that case what idea could man form of a Being whom the wisest amongst them could not represent or describe? Do we understand the nature of this Supreme Being better by using the name so well known of Providence? Again no; since we have introduced several meanings into this word which are inconsistent the one with the other. Amongst them there might well be some that are erroneous, which would thus lead us to rest our hopes on false foundations.

This mist, hiding from us the meaning of words and obscuring our ideas, is partly owing to a fault committed by the ancients themselves.

When our ancestors communed with their divinities, they did not ask themselves what the names they pronounced really meant; in invoking Varuna, Helios, Athene, Prithvi, and the others, they were satisfied, at least for the time being, since names possess a strange calming property; this unquestioning acquiescence has been bequeathed to us. We are neither more enquiring, more exact, nor more pedantic than the greater part of our ancestors; we speak of angels, for instance, without seeking to fathom their nature, much in the same way as we might mention lords and dukes without troubling ourselves to reflect that the one means "bread-giver" and the other "dux," or one capable of being a leader of men.

In speaking of the soul, the immortality of the soul, and of religion, we use words which have become common property, and it is not necessary to analyse them in order to feel sure that they represent things which are very real; still we do not strive to understand what these things really are. Thus it happens that words whose meaning is unknown to us or escapes us, are generally those of which we make daily use; we keep to the impression received of them in our childhood, or

accepted by current opinion, or with which sentiment invests them, but this is unsatisfactory; we should feel ashamed of not possessing more accurate knowledge than this of geography or arithmetic. On the other hand, there are scientific terms which seem to us so technical that we willingly abandon their use to experts, and yet their meaning can be readily and definitely grasped.

What meaning, for instance, has the word *infinite* for us, even if taken in its most simple acceptation; this *infinite* towards which our thoughts travel when we raise our eyes to the skies? Astronomers say to us, "Look at something greater than the greatest possible greatness, that is the infinitely great." They then quote figures, but these figures of infinite greatness elude our imagination, we repeat them mechanically and only out of respect to the high scientific authority who guarantees the accuracy of the calculations or the value of the appreciation.

A small object, apparently of the size of a homeopathic globule, moves in space, it contains our continents and our oceans, this globule moves in company with other globules of the same nature.

Astronomers speak to us of the millions of miles separating us from the sun, yet this distance dwindles down to nothing as compared with the nearest star, which, we are told, lies twenty millions of millions of miles from our earth. Another stupendous thought is that a ray of light traverses space at the rate of 187,000 miles in a second, and yet it requires three years to reach us.

But this is only a small matter.

More than one thousand millions of such stars have been discovered by our telescopes, and there may be millions of millions of suns within our siderial system which are as yet beyond the reach of our best telescopes; even that siderial system need not be regarded as single within the universe, thousands of millions of similar

systems may be recognised in the galaxy or milky way.[1]

Now let us turn our eyes to the infinitely little. One drop of water taken from the ocean contains atoms so small that a grain of the finest dust would seem colossal by the side of them; chemists are now able to ascertain the relative positions of atoms so minute that millions of them can stand upon a needle's point.

All this we gather from science when—working together with the telescope—it investigates space; and this may still be little compared to what we might see through glasses, which should magnify objects some millions of times more than our best instruments.

The infinite in space has engaged the attention of many thinkers; I will quote from two only, as this infinite, which they studied from different points of view, yet suggests thoughts somewhat alike. Kepler, the discoverer of the laws on which our planetary system is based, said, "My highest wish is to find *within* the God whom I have found everywhere *without*." Kant, the philosopher, to whom the Divine in nature and the Divine in man appeared as transcendent and beyond our cognisance, and who refused to listen to any theological argument tending to prove the existence of God, yet says, "Two things fill me with new and ever growing admiration and awe: the starry firmament above me, and the moral law within me; neither of them is hidden in darkness, I see them both before me, and I connect them directly with the consciousness of my own existence."[2]

These are very abstract thoughts; and it is pertinent to notice that the most solemn religious terms, and the most striking expressions of admiration, and poetical phrases of love, have their source in verbal roots, indicative of acts and conditions palpable to the senses.

[1] Max Müller, *Natural Religion*, p. 138.
[2] Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 393.

But I am approaching too closely to matters of high import. I am drawn by the word *Infinite*. Aristotle said truly, "the Infinite attracts." He was thinking of that other infinite, which is not the one intended by astronomers; but for myself the infinite in nature captivates me so powerfully that I find it difficult to touch earth again. Let us walk in beaten paths; let us endeavour to grasp the meaning of the more simple words learnt mechanically at school, such as those denoting abstraction as well as nouns, and terms both general and particular; and let us see to what phase of thought and speech these grammatical exercises will carry us.

Each palpable object is known to us according as it affects our senses, that is to say, by its properties; all impalpable objects cannot be known otherwise than by their qualities; but nothing exists in nature, whether palpable or impalpable, that has only one property or one quality, each object has several; an object as it exists in reality is concrete, and has a concrete name. If we wished to consider only one of its attributes, we should have to take that apart and isolate it, in order to fix our thoughts exclusively on that; "we must drop that of which the attributes are attributes."[1] We see white snow, white chalk, white milk, we have the sensation of the white colour; but to take whiteness apart from the snow, the chalk, and the milk, is an operation which requires an instrument, a means, this we possess in a word, viz., the word *white*. Without that word we should have the sensation of whiteness, but not the idea; it is the word *white*, whilst separating the white colour from the snow, the chalk, and the milk, that gives us the abstract idea as well as the abstract term whiteness. This mental act is called *abstraction*: and it is by this process of abstraction

[1] Max Müller, *Science of Thought*, p. 80.

that we really arrive at the true knowledge of anything, apart from the sensation of it only.

Here is another example of abstraction. Let us suppose that two persons are in one room, and that there are in the room two windows, two doors, two tables and two chairs. Let us try to obliterate in our mind the persons, the windows, the doors, the tables and the chairs; nothing now remains but the abstraction *two*. Now *two*, as such, apart from objects, does not exist in nature; still it is a conception we can retain in our mind, and this abstract idea can be incorporated in the abstract word *two*.

These two examples of abstraction tell us but little of what is meant by it; and although they teach us little of the part abstraction plays in our mental life, they are correct from a logical point of view, and clearly demonstrate the impossibility of retaining a thought apart from the word expressing it, since evidently the representation of *two* and of *whiteness* could not have been made if the words had been lacking.

The faculty of abstraction has no doubt taken time to develop in man, and the absence of abstract words and consequently of abstract ideas was complete in primitive man as it now is in our very young children. The faculties of brutes can by no means attain to abstraction. One reason, amongst others, why we have no ground to think brutes have abstract general ideas is that they do not speak, that they have no use of the words without which it is impossible to carry out the operation which I have just described, and to cause a conception to arise from a sensation.

When, in our early days, our parents gave us instruction on the three divisions of natural history, and explained to us of what they consisted, we did not suspect that a period of immense length had elapsed before man succeeded in thus skilfully classifying the vast mass of names in the

manner which struck us as so natural and inevitable. Many thousands of objects were before us, each one entitled to bear an expressive name; and in proportion as our knowledge of things increased was science called upon to furnish new terms; their name became legion and memory failed to retain them. It therefore became a necessity to classify the objects of a common nature under one name; hence the evolution of the terms animal, vegetable and mineral, which relieved us from the burden of enumerating all the objects composing genus and species; then in speaking of them to others we use the generic term, which at the same time presents the image to our own minds. Thus when we wish to denote men having the same nationality as ourselves we employ the collective term compatriot; in the same way the word furniture includes all that serves to furnish our rooms. By the help of this ingenious combination we relieve our memories of a mass of encumbering words, we economise our time and our powers, and simplify the machinery of our thoughts.

This is evidently an advantage. But now a difficulty presents itself. When employing these general terms, such as vegetable, animal, the human race, we are speaking of things of which we are ignorant, and are therefore for us as if they had no existence. We cannot have a complete knowledge of vegetables since that word comprehends all plants and trees on the earth; neither of animals, since "animal" includes not only all beasts lacking reason but also man who is endowed with it. We are equally ignorant of the human race, since it is composed of all human creatures, past, present and to come. It is evident that we only know individual persons and things, such as this fir tree or that oak, this horse, this cow, Paul or James, and we know them because we are in a position to distinguish them by naming them, or indicating them.

How is it that philosophers of the mental calibre possessed by Locke, Hume and Berkeley—whose minds follow so closely the progress of the perception of general ideas—did not question how it was that terms which were applicable to these ideas could equally well be applied to particular things? What was the origin of the word *man* that it could be as suitable for Paul or James as for many men, in fact the whole human race? This is a fact about which philosophers do not appear to have troubled themselves, and which the science of language alone can explain.

In the time of our primitive ancestors human knowledge was evolved gradually from what was confused and vague, before arriving at what was deemed settled and distinct. Man's vocabulary was small, substantives were rare; that which we now understand by garden, courtyard, field, habitation, was merged into one and the same conception, and would be expressed by one vocable, of which the modern equivalent is enclosure; the word *serpent* designated all creatures that crawled, the word *fruit* implied all that could be eaten, the word *man* all who could think; each name was a general term expressive of a general idea.

We may remember that the Sanscrit word *sar*, to run, which was at first used for rivers in general, became a particular name; a demonstrative element joined to the verb, changing it into *sarit*, run here, sufficed at once to turn it into an intelligible phrase, and the name of a particular river. In order to form the word *man-u-s*, man, the constructors of language combined the root *man*, measurer, thinker, in its secondary form *man-u*, with the suffix *s*, which gives the meaning think-here. This was at first not of general application, but as it could be repeated any number of times and referred each time to different persons, who could each be named thinker-here, it became a general term. We thus see that the name

manus was from the beginning something more than a mere conventional sign applied to a particular person as are all proper names. It was a predicative name, that is applicable to all possessing the same attributes, viz., of being able to think, and capable of the same act, that of thinking.

This discovery was followed by another not less unexpected. When examining the oldest word for name, which in Sanscrit is *naman*, in Greek *onoma*, in Latin *nomen*, we find that it dates from a time when the Sanscrit, Greek and Latin languages were all one; consequently the English *name* and the German *Name* are not as we supposed, words invented by the ancient Saxons, but they already existed before the separation of Teutonic idioms from their elder brothers.

After some further steps our contemporary philologists discovered the sources whence proceeded this Sanscrit *nâman*; it is formed of the root *nâ*, originally *gnâ*, to know, joined to a suffix which generally expresses an instrument, a means; *nâman* is the representative of *gnâman*, which we recognise in the Latin *cognomen*, the consonant *g* being dropped as in *natus*, son, which was formerly *gnatus*. This word *name* had at first a much more extended meaning than that of a simple arbitrary sign applied "to what we call a thing." The constructors of the word were aware of a fact of which consciousness was afterwards lost, and which the learned ignored during all the supervening centuries—viz., that all names, far from being mere conventional signs used to distinguish one thing from another, were meant to express what it was possible to know of a thing; and that a name thus places us in a position really to be cognisant of a thing. A natural insight taught the early framers of our language a truth only acquired by us after interminable researches, such as Hegel expresses when saying, "We think in words," and which we find again in this somewhat

tautological expression "nominibus noscimus" = "tel nom, telle notion."

The fact that names, which are signs not of things, but of particular concepts, are all derived from general ideas, is one of the most fruitful discoveries of the science of language; since it not only expresses the truth which has been stated below, that language and the capability of forming general ideas separate man from the animals, but also a second truth that these two phenomena are two sides of the same truth. This explains the reason why the science of language rejects equally the interjectional theory and the mimetic, but accepts the final elements of language, those roots which all contain concepts.

The name man, which we all apply to ourselves, is a title of nobility to which none other can compare. It is the direct issue of *man*, which in its turn came from *mâ*, to measure, this gave *mâs*, moon, to the Sanscrit language. The word man contains in itself the kernel of subtle thought; if we connect the word with the celestial body that helps us to measure our time, we do not therefore necessarily invest the moon with a living and thinking personality; it is sufficient to consider that if our ancestors conceived of it as measuring the nights and days, they had in themselves the capabilities with which they invested the words they created.

We must also notice that the creators of this name having connected it with the loftiest thing of which they could conceive—thought—did not stop there; the sight of what was lowest—the dust—inspired them with another name, *homo* = earth-born; this Latin word having the same source as *humus* = the soil. Our fathers also gave themselves a third name, which was *brotos* in Greek, *mortalis* in Latin, and *marta*—the dying—in Sanscrit; they could hardly have applied the word mortal to themselves if they had not at the same time believed in other beings who did not die.

And this strange fact has come to pass, that on our planet there existed in former days men—simple mortals as they were—who manipulated thought, incorporating it with language, the only domain in which it can exist; then these marvellous men so entirely eclipsed themselves, and passed out of our ken, that their posterity do not recognise them under their modest garb of anonymity; for their work though still living through thousands of centuries, is so unrecognised that men ask themselves, "Why is it not possible to think apart from words?"

Thus we acknowledge the profound wisdom of the conceptions of our ancestors; but their understanding worked unequally, on certain points it was very advanced, but on others behindhand.

In following the march of human intellect in the past, we are struck by the slowness with which thought and speech co-operated. As long as our ancestors had no occasion to speak of the action of covering a surface with a liquid or soft substance, they did not possess the word *var* = to cover; "the name of colour in Sanscrit is *varna*, clearly derived from this word; and not till the art of painting, in its most primitive form, was discovered and named, could there have been a name for colour." For some time they continued to view various objects differently coloured without distinguishing the tints; it is well known that the distinction of colours is of late date; our ancestors gazed on the blue sky, or the green trees, as in a dream, without recognising blue or green, as long as they lacked words to define the two colours, and some time elapsed before they particularised the colours by giving each its proper title.

We speak of the seven colours of the rainbow, because the intermediate tints elude us; the ancients acted much in the same way, Xenophanes speaks of the rainbow as a cloud of purple, red, and yellow; Aristotle also speaks of the tri-coloured rainbow, red, yellow, and green; and

Democritus seems only to have mentioned black, white and yellow.

Does this indicate that our senses have gradually become more acute and accurate? No, no one has asserted that the sensitiveness of the organs of sense was less thousands of years ago than it is now; the sensation has not changed, but "we see in this evolution of consciousness of colour how perception goes hand in hand with the evolution of language, and how, by a very slow process, every definite concept is developed out of an infinitude of indistinct perceptions."[1]

The names of colours have not been applied arbitrarily, any more than the names given to divinities. Blue, for instance, owes its origin to the visible results of violence, or of an accident; the science of etymology shows us that the Old Norse words, blár, blá, blatt, which now mean blue, meant originally the livid colour of a bruise. Grimm traces these words back to the Gothic *bliggvan*, to strike; and he quotes as an analogous case the Latin *cæsius*—a bluish grey, from *cædere*, to cut. If the assertion that blue and green are rarely mentioned until a late date be correct, it would follow that they had been worked out of an infinity of colours before they took their place definitely as the colour of the sky and the colour of the trees and grass.

As we trace etymology to its source, we see how man's perception was confused at first. From the Sanscrit root *ghar*, which has many different meanings, such as to heat, to melt, to drip, to burn, to shine, come not only many words—heat, oven, warmth, and brightness, but also the names of many bright colours, all varying between yellow, green, red, and white. But the most striking example is afforded by the Sanscrit word *ak-tu*. Here we have the first instance of the uncertainty in the meaning of the names of colours which pervades all languages, and which

[1] Max Müller.

can be terminated at last by scientific definition only. This word has two opposite meanings—a light tinge or ray of light, and also a dark tinge, and night; this same word in Greek, *ak-tis*, means a ray of light. Thus, whilst ideas are not definitely named, even the most simple, such as those of white and black, are not realised; philosophers have long known this, but the learned in physical science seem only recently to have drawn attention to the fact. Virchow was the first to make the following assertion: "Only after their perceptions have become fixed by language, are the senses brought to a conscious possession and a real understanding of them."[1]

Surgeons have explained that the faculty of sight proceeds from the movement of an unknown medium, which in the case of light has been called ether, this strikes the retina, and is conveyed to the brain by the optic nerve; "but what relation there is between the effect, namely, our sensation of red, and the cause, namely, the 500 millions of millions of vibrations of ether in one second, neither philosophy nor physical science has yet been able to explain."[2]

We are able to picture to ourselves the difficulties which assailed man in his efforts to express his impressions in primitive times, since we find ourselves at times struggling with the same difficulties, and there are occasions when we struggle in vain, we do not conquer the difficulty.

Sensations which are subjective and personal are of all others the most difficult to define, since we lack words to express what is from its nature purely personal; and yet we have frequently occasion to mention them, how can we best express ourselves? As the required word does not seem forthcoming we have recourse to metaphor, and

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 151. Max Müller.
[2] *Natural Religion*, p. 118. Max Müller.

almost unconsciously we use terms borrowed from external phenomena connected with the sense of hearing, of smelling, and of tasting, and which for the most part are acts or conditions in the domain of the sense of sight. Our old acquaintances the roots, whose meanings are to cut, to pinch, to bite, to burn, to hit, to sting, to soften, having formed the base of the adjectives sharp, sweet, keen, burning, we use these to describe certain sensations. We do not know how better to particularise a physical pain than by comparing it to something that tears, cuts or stings. But if certain physical ills, certain colour perceptions, certain impressions of sharpness, sweetness and heat experienced when tasting various foods find metaphorical expression in external acts, there still remains a whole category of simple ideas for which no words can be found. There are certain sensations of taste which cannot be expressed in words. Yesterday I ate a pear, to-day I have eaten a peach ; I am quite capable of distinguishing the special flavour of each, but finding nothing in the world of facts with which to compare them, I am without words to apply to them, and it would be as impossible for me to convey an idea of the flavour to any one who had never eaten a pear or a peach as to make any person understand if I spoke in a language which was unknown to him.

Since all words that succeed in expressing our sensations are drawn from external phenomena, we are in a position to know the origin and historic past of these words. But I cannot thus easily foresee even the near future of some of these words. The sound of the clarionet and that of the hautbois, the whistling of the wind, the whisper of the waves, the yellow of the straw and that of the lemon, the green of the emerald and the blue of the sky, all characterise objects belonging to the material world ; but if these words : clarionet and hautbois, wind and waves, straw and lemon, emerald and sky, which alone

enable us to define clearly to our minds certain sounds and certain colours were lacking in our vocabulary, I do not know how a musician could have composed a symphony, or an artist painted his picture, although the creation of both works of art proceeds equally from personal inspiration invisible to the eye.

The tie that binds thought to speech has been alternately acknowledged and forgotten; if Plato believed that the origin of language was the imitation of the voices of nature (an error which weighed heavily on humanity during the space of two thousand years), he also knew that words are indispensable to man for the very formation of thought. Abelard was more explicit on this point, he said: "Language is generated by the intellect, and generates intellect." Hobbes understood so well that language was meant first of all for ourselves, and afterwards only for others, that he calls words, as meant for ourselves, *notæ*, and distinguishes them from *signa*, the same words as used for the sake of communication, and he added: "If there were only one man in the world he would require *notæ*.[1] The close connection between thought and speech cannot be more clearly or concisely expressed.

This discovery makes its way slowly in the world. because certain philosophers who have been rendered immobile by tradition, darken counsel by their speculations. Some of the Polynesians would seem to have a far truer insight into the nature of thought and language than these philosophers to whom I have made allusion; they call thinking "speaking in the stomach," which means of course to speak inaudibly, and it is this absolutely inarticulate speech which is so often mistaken for thought without words; because the fact is ignored that *notion* and *name* are two words for one thing. "It is certain," they say, "that a thought may be conceived in the mind,

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 40. Max Müller.

but is formulated at a later period; for instance, if you have to write a letter of no great importance, and which affects you little, take your pen, and before the idea appears to you completely clothed, your hand has passed over the paper, and you proceed to read your ideas in the words you see before you." This is an illusion. We can no doubt distinguish the written word from the word-concept, but the former could not exist without the latter. I defy our opponents to think of the most ordinary and familiar object, such as a dog for instance, without saying to themselves the word dog. They would explain that the remembrance only of a special dog, or of its bark would suffice to call up the image of the dog in their minds; they do not see that the likeness of a dog, or the remembrance of its bark is equivalent to the word dog, and that they cannot possibly become conscious to themselves of what they appear to be thinking, without having the word in reserve in some part of themselves, either "in the stomach," as some savages say, or, as is more gracefully expressed by the Italians, *in petto.*

Descartes was a learned Christian, who pondered for some time over the questions whether the human mind could be certain of anything without being supernaturally enlightened; he resolved to prove it; and to this end he imagined that he, Descartes, was certain of nothing—doubted of all—even mathematical conclusions; he then reflected on this position, and after a time the idea occurred to him that as he was capable of reflection it proved without a doubt that he, Descartes, existed, and that consequently it was no longer possible to have doubts of his own identity.

The portrait of this philosopher as depicted on the cover of his works, represents him reclining in a chair thinking —thinking—thinking—and exclaiming, "Cogito ergo sum."

Those persons amongst us who are not specially interested

in any system of philosophy are certainly in the majority; all know that such systems exist, and that they are noted, but from the want of reflection, however little, some persons look upon them as having sprung fully equipped, and in their present form, from the brains of their founders. But it would be incorrect, simply on the evidence of a frontispiece, to consider these philosophical processes as thus instantaneous. The systems of philosophy, even those of small value, require much time for their elaboration, and ripen slowly, and are never free from opposition. They establish close links between the living thinkers of to-day, and those who are no longer on earth. The philosophers of the Middle Ages consulted those of antiquity, the thinkers of to-day strove to be in agreement with those alike of the Middle Ages and of antiquity, and there arise from this intercommunion of knowledge, groups of ideas of which some are borrowed and some original, some true and some false; these are dependent on the intellectual lucidity and vigour of the latest arrivals in the arena. Many problems are thus threshed out before our eyes. Not long ago three philosophers were in dispute and Noiré records the arguments; the discussion turned on the question of priority of thought or speech.

They agreed on the fundamental point, all three said there could be no reason without language, nor language without reason. But as they penetrated more deeply into the question, they perceived divergencies; although the conception and the word be inseparable, yet there may be a moment of time—infinitely little, doubtless—between the arrival of the one and of the other, as with twins.

According to Schopenhauer conceptions were the first in the field, and their immediate duty consisted in creating words; since the mind could not deal with ideas at will, could neither evoke them, grasp them, nor reject them, whilst no signs were attached to them.

To this Geiger objected. How could ideas be produced

whilst no signs existed with which to represent them? Words came first, and thought, rendered possible by the development of language, followed; "language has created reason; before language, man was without reason." [1]

Max Müller replied to both. How could there be a sign when there was nothing to represent? Conceptions and words, inseparable from the beginning, were produced on the same day; the day when man's history begins; before that what was a fugitive impression and a vocal sound void of sense, became a conception. Max Müller adds: "If Geiger had said that with every new word there is more reason, or that every progress of reason is marked by a new word, he would have been right, for the growth of reason and language may be said to be coral-like, each shell is the product of life, and becomes in turn the support of new life." [2]

The most important results obtained during the Middle Ages on these subjects find their representations in this discussion carried on by the three learned contemporaries. Max Müller's point of view is one which reconciles the two diverse opinions.

Men still find themselves under the magic influence of the past after some thousands of years; the first words which our ancestors used in the midst of their ordinary occupations have not ceased to appear in our daily conversations, in our philosophical writings, and in the reports of scientific proceedings; it is impossible to speak of our family or social relations, of our affections, our ordinary obligations, our most sacred duties, our observance of laws, without having recourse to words and expressions, which represent the acts of linking or *tying*, those early activities of our ancestors. The chemist speaks of the *affinity* of the substances with which he is working; the poet and the devout believer when giving free scope to their highest

[1] *On the Origin of Human Language and Reason.* Geiger.

[2] *Science of Thought*, p. 299. Max Müller.

aspirations do not find truer or loftier terms than *links, chains, ties,* for that which connects them with the Giver of all pure, sublime thoughts.

As it is possible in the present day to speak of *delving* into a question (*creuser*) and of *racking* our brains (creuser) when we puzzle over a conundrum; of *linking* one idea to another; of *polishing* our manners by the help of art and letters; of seeking to *soften* the heart of God by offerings (as if He were a mercenary Judge), of linking ourselves with others the better to accomplish a good work, of uniting in freeing ourselves from an undesirable opponent; it follows that our ancestors as they emerged from their condition of muteness found it necessary to *dig* (creuser) cabins for themselves, to *polish* stones, to weave and plait branches together, and to soften tough roots for their nourishment. The same words repeat themselves from time immemorial.

But how comes it that these words, which have remained the same outwardly, have so completely changed their meaning as exactly to adapt themselves to modern usage? We have been deceived by appearances. These words have not changed their meaning, but at first they were applied to tangible objects and visible acts, those which were the most necessary and the most usual in daily life at that time; and now these words are applied to intangible things, and invisible acts, the most necessary and usual in our present mental life.

Nor is this which follows less curious. This adaptation of the old words to modern usages could only have been accomplished on one condition, that we should forget many things, and be utterly oblivious to the original destination of these words; that we should put from before our eyes all images of caves, branches, stones and tough roots; and this condition we have fulfilled absolutely; the forgetfulness has been complete; no one suspects the source of these expressions; only a small number of men knows it,

but these men are thoroughly aware that they are making use of the true primitive forms of the human language.

A difficulty to be avoided still remains. It might be said that, as it is the result of concerted action undertaken from a community of interest, that these images have become fixed in the memory, and that if the ideas and representations exercised so potent a spell on us, that we were compelled to use the words which can be traced back to the first period of language, does it not follow that we absolutely resemble each other, and that consequently we must renounce the idea of attributing the least individuality to ourselves? This is a great mistake. Each one of us gives to these representations of ideas that form towards which he is impelled by his own nature, his education, his environment. A man who has some knowledge of astronomy will look at the star-lit sky with quite another eye to that of the poet, who knows nothing of the subject but is struck with its inexpressible splendour. A landscape painter would see in a tree details of beauty which would quite escape one who admired it, but had never sought to draw it; a clever architect with one glance at a newly-built house could assign it a place either with the failures or with those houses which were a success, and this glance would sufficiently account for the murmured exclamation, "How gladly would I live in it!"

CHAPTER IX

A DECISIVE STEP

How is it that primitive man, provided with five senses which bring him into contact with the material world only, has found it possible to conceive the existence of an invisible world peopled with beings whom his eyes cannot see, nor his hands touch, nor his ears hear?

Between the birth of human reason and the invention of writing a long period of time elapsed; when the art of writing was followed by that of printing, man then printed all that he had thought and written, and at present we possess thousands of volumes which will inform us on all the truths and errors which have alternately illuminated and obscured the human mind.

Whoever would take the trouble to examine this mass of documents, and read those which furnish an approximate estimate of the mental activity of our primitive ancestors, will see that the human *ego* pursued science unconsciously long before scholars appeared, and applied the name of philosophers to themselves, because they had sought patiently and with many discussions, through thousands of centuries, to find the best way of arriving at the truth.

These ancestors of ours were of an enquiring turn of mind.

The appearance of religion amongst men is at the same time the most natural and the most supernatural fact in the history of humanity.

The greater number of philosophers have recognised that the tendency of the human mind to turn towards

that which is outside the domain of the senses is as powerful in man as the desire of eating and drinking is in all living beings. The ancients acknowledged this to be a true sense, as irresistible as the rest of the operations of our external senses, and they have well named it *sensus numinis*—the consciousness of the divine. The desire of understanding the secrets with which the Unknown was invested naturally led to the investigation of the influence which these secrets might exercise on the destinies of mankind. Amongst certain peoples this gave birth to the art of divination. To this they abandoned themselves in all sincerity, not doubting that omnipotent beings would always be ready to make their will known to mortals.

The men of modern times have shown that they have the critical faculty more highly developed, and their investigations have dealt more with practical matters. In the eighteenth century, writers, historians and philosophers —Voltaire amongst the number—wishing to know how the phenomenon of mental religion appeared in the world, collected all the data to be obtained from travellers concerning savages; they found that without exception all believed in occult powers, as distinct from material or human forces, and doubted not the efficacy of certain magic arts in use amongst them to attract these powers to themselves, and to constrain them to act on their behalf. Judging by analogy these writers contend that primitive man, doubtless impressed by the alarming phenomena of nature, would make search for the unknown beings around him, whom the storms, the thunders and the lightnings obey, but these beings were invisible, consequently there must be an invisible world in communication with the visible or human world.

In this way were the beliefs of the present-day savages supposed to be those current at the dawn of religious conceptions of humanity.

The ignorance of a subject, of whatever nature, has never prevented the laying down of axioms concerning that subject. Towards the end of the eighteenth century some Portuguese navigators, who never embarked without providing themselves with talisman and amulet,—to protect them during their voyages,—which they called *feitiços*, seeing some negroes of the Gold Coast prostrating themselves with every appearance of reverence, before bones, stones, or the tails of some animals, concluded at once without further investigation that these were considered as divinities by the negroes; and on their return to their native land, they spread the report that savage races worshipped *feitiços*. This word *feitiços* corresponds to the Latin *factitius*, meaning that which is made by hand, as the amulets were which belonged to the Portuguese sailors. The well-known President de Brosses used the name and promulgated the idea, and without having set foot on countries inhabited by negroes, composed and published a book on their fetishes. In this manner the French language was enriched in 1760 by the new word fetish. All this seemed so natural and plausible that the word, and the idea of the adoration of fetishes became quite general; the theory of the worship of fetishes penetrated rapidly, and took deep root in the public mind, it found its way very readily into school books and manuals, and we were taught that the religion of savages consists solely in the worship of fetishes, and learned writers draw the conclusion that fetishism must necessarily have been the primitive religion of humanity.

With what readiness do well-instructed persons, no less than the ignorant, allow themselves to speak without sufficiently reflecting on what they say. In order to elevate material objects, of whatever kind, to the rank of divinities, it would be necessary previously to possess the concept of a divinity. Writers on religion speak of that as existing in primitive times which they seek to describe; they might

as well say that primitive men mummified their dead before they had *mûm* or wax to embalm them with. Fetishism cannot be considered as absolutely primitive, seeing that from its nature it must presuppose the previous growth of the predicate God. This idea of De Brosses and his successors will remain for ever a striking anachronism in the history of religion.

The history of all primitive races opens with this note. "Man is conscious of a divine descent, though made from the dust of the earth; the Hindoo doubted it not, though he called Dyn his father, and Prithvi his mother; Plato knew it when he said the earth produced men, but that God formed them."

On the banks of the Rhine, Tacitus listened to the war-songs of the Germans; they were to him in an unknown tongue. "It resembles the whisperings of birds," he said, but added, "They are cries of valour," and his ear caught the sound of two words which recurred frequently, "Tuisto Mannus!"

We now know what formed the basis of these songs; the Germans were celebrating their lineal ancestors under the names of Tuisto, and Mannus, his son. Tuisto appears to have been one form of Tiu, the Aryan god of light. Tacitus tells us that the Germans "called by the names of gods that hidden thing which they did not perceive except by reverence."[1] Mannus, so the Germans considered, sprang from the earth, which they venerated as their mother-earth who before nourishing her children on its fruits first gave them life. This Mannus, grandson of the god of light, meant originally man.

Certain races living beyond the pale of organised religious systems having been interrogated have furnished the following information concerning their belief.

[1] Tac. Germ. 9. "Deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud quod sola reverentia vident," from Max Müller's *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 94.

A very low race in India is supposed to worship the sun under the name of Chando or Cando; they declared to the missionaries who had settled amongst them that Chando had created the world. "How is that possible! Who then has created the sun itself?" They replied with "We do not mean the visible Chando, but an invisible one."[1]

"Our god," said the original natives of California to those who asked in what god they believed, "our god has neither father nor mother, and his origin is quite unknown. But he is present everywhere, he sees everything even at midnight, though himself invisible to human eyes. He is the friend of all good people, and he punishes the evil-doers."

A Blackfoot Indian, when arguing with a Christian missionary, said: "There were two religions given by the Great Spirit, one in a book for the guidance of the white men, who, by following its teaching, will reach the white man's heaven; the other is in the heads of the Indians, in the sky, rocks, rivers and mountains. And the red men who listen to God in nature, will hear his voice, and find at last the heaven beyond."

These Indians consider that that external nature which to us is at the same time the veil and the revelation of the Divine, is sufficient to teach them so much concerning the Supreme Being that missionaries are superfluous.

Amongst those whose thoughts are occupied by the origin of religious perception in man, there exist several theories; the first, that the idea of infinity is a necessity to the mind of man, and that by enlarging the boundaries of space and of time, it arrives at that which is without space and without time. Thus may a true philosopher reason; but primitive man was no philosopher, and the infinite of philosophy had no existence for him. Another theory is that man is naturally endowed with religious

[1] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 214.

instincts, which render him—alone of all living creatures —capable of perceiving the infinite in the invisible; but the nature of this innate instinct not being clearly defined, it is in vain that we try to explain one mystery by another. Others again affirm that religious impressions were the result of a supernatural revelation, but they seem vague with regard to the time in the life of humanity, to which people, and in what manner this came to pass. At the same time they draw attention to the fact that men have always arrived at conclusions rapidly, and, as they consider, without due reflection; one of these conclusions is that *God is.* Let us, for the sake of argument, replace the word *man* by the word *intuitive sense* or apprehension, and we shall understand why this intuitive sense renders it a superfluous task to make great researches as to the reasons of man's decision that *God is.* This intuitive sense is wise, and utters at times great truths; but the philosophers who consider it their metier to seek for the reason of things are not content with what satisfies intuitive sense, and they act on their right.

In our days the religious problem is viewed from two sides. What is understood by these words—the conception of God? This is the question of questions; and the names of the writers on the subject, both philosophical and theological, are too numerous to give. It is a psychological and thought impelling study.

How did the idea of God first arise in the minds of primitive man? This is another question which few try and answer. It is a historical study.

This presentation of the problem is perhaps not calculated to inspire excitement or let loose agitating passions; and apparently the end of the nineteenth century will not witness the renewal of the philosophical debates on the subject which characterised the last half of the eighteenth.

Never either, before or since, has there been so much agitation, nor have men's minds been so tossed by diverse

currents. Many various theories were promulgated at the time, but opinions grouped themselves chiefly round two diametrically opposite schools of thought, towards one or the other of which they leaned.

According to Hume, Condillac and their adherents, matter alone exists; our understanding, our feelings, our will are only transformed sensations. This was pure materialism. Pure idealism was represented by Berkeley, who went so far as to deny the reality of matter; according to him the bodies making up the universe have no real existence; the true realities were God and the ideas He produced in us.

Those who preserved their ancient beliefs were the most troubled, they began to ask themselves whether the foundations of their faith were solid, and they much desired to see certain problems solved. These thoughts had exercised the minds of the sages of India, the thinkers of Greece, the dreamers of Alexandria, and the divines and scholars of the Middle Ages. They were the old problems of the world, what we know of the Infinite, the questions of the beginning and end of our existence; the questions of the possibility of absolute certainty in the evidence of the senses, of reason or of faith.

How much was comprehended in these enquiries.

One hundred years previously, the cautious reasoner, Descartes, instead of asking "What do we know?" posed in its place the question, "How do we know?"

This was in fact a fundamental question which appealed to philosophers who followed Descartes, as of the utmost importance, and they also asked themselves, "After what manner does the human mind acquire what it knows?"

What is called Locke's tenet, "Nihil est in intellectu quod non ante fuerit in sensu," Leibnitz answered by "Nihil—nisi intellectus." Noiré gives this sentiment a fresh turn by saying: "There is nothing in this plant that

was not already in the soil, the water and the atmosphere, but that which causes this plant to be a plant."

Condillac, who agreed with Locke, thus formulated his opinion : "Penser s'est sentir"; or, "In order to feel it is necessary to possess senses," which is self-evident.

Nevertheless, this sentence scandalised some of the philosophers, they considered it degraded thought. It degraded thought only in Condillac's mouth, since he and his school had previously taken out of *sentir* or sensation all that possessed the right to be called thought; but for those who admit that sensation is really impregnated with thought it is no degradation ; it is then true to say that thought is sensation, in the same way as an oak-tree may be said to be the acorn ; and a little reflection will show us that "the acorn is far more wonderful than the oak, and perceiving far more wonderful than thinking." This was not acknowledged by some who disagreed as to the nature of reason and sensation; they considered the former a mysterious power that could only be a direct gift of the Creator, and the senses, to which we owe our perceptions, appeared so natural and simple, as not to require a scientific explanation.

If philosophers, such as Descartes and Leibnitz, succeeded in influencing certain enlightened spirits, their language was not understood by the general public; and Berkeley's idealism when pushed to the extreme point, proved too abstract to counterbalance the sensualist doctrines ; its language hardly penetrated beyond the inner circle of the experts dealing with the subject, whereas the writings of Locke, Condillac and Hume permeated all classes of society ; everywhere the same questions were asked, and often unanswered amidst the maze of metaphysics, in which it would have been difficult to obtain a precise explanation of a science not yet clearly defined.

It is natural that reason after its high flight in pursuit of truth, frightened by the obstacles met in its ascent, and

by the contradictions found in itself, should fall heavily to earth, exclaiming with Voltaire, "O metaphysics, we are as advanced as in the times of the Druids." This same feeling of distrust towards proceedings which resulted only in hypothesis, was also expressed by Newton, who, recognising that philosophy moved nowhere so freely nor with such certainty as in the domain of facts, recently cried, "O physics, preserve me from metaphysics."

"Towards the end of the eighteenth century the current public opinion had been decidedly in favour of materialism, but a reaction was slowly setting in in the minds of independent thinkers when Kant appeared"; he came so exactly in the nick of time that one almost doubts whether the tide was turning, or whether he turned the tide.

To sketch briefly the chief points in Kant's system such as he has given us in his book called *Critique of Pure Reason*, is a rash proceeding; my object, which is to satisfy the imperious and more immediate wants of our moral being, could only be attained by ignoring the irradicable difficulties; this is excusable if we, unlearned members of society, are to form any idea of this same philosophy.

The technical terms which abound in philosophical works are useful in the exposition of a system, but rather the reverse for those who are striving to grasp its salient features; for understanding these terms partially only, or not understanding them at all, they are tempted to imagine that they take in the meaning; this leads to vague notions being entertained on a subject which is nevertheless earnestly studied. Generally I abstain from the use of esoteric terms, but Kant having coined fresh ones to express his ideas it behoves us to use his own formula. To paraphrase them so as to render them intelligible without multiplying them might only further obscure the sense, and yet, on the other hand, to enter

freely into further developments would require a volume, and the end would be better served by going direct to Kant's work. Hence the embarrassment I feel on approaching the subject.

Kant's Teaching.

Kant undertook a work which no one before him had attempted. Instead of criticising, as was then the fashion, the result of our knowledge, whether in religion or in history, or science, he shut his eyes resolutely to all that philosophy, whether sensualistic or spiritualistic asserted as true, and making Descartes his starting point he boldly went to the root of the matter; he questioned whether human reason had the power of perceiving the truth, and in cases where this power existed—but with limits—he sought to discover why these limits existed. He therefore resolved to subject reason itself to his searching analysis, and thus to assist, as it were, at the birth of thought. He accomplished this extraordinary task with an ease of which no one previously would have been capable.

The world is governed by immutable laws, and the human race is subject to them. Kant gives an account of those which it must necessarily obey in order to pass from a passive "mirror" into a conscious mind.

Sensation.

In any material object I may seek to obtain, such as a table, my interests are concentrated in the table itself, not on the tools which the workman has used in its manufacture; but if it were a question of thought, then the means by which it was produced by the human mind engage us; and these means, of course, consist in the proper use of the instruments at man's disposal.

That which was at the origin of mankind is repeated at the birth of every human being; he comes into the world in a lethargic condition, but endowed with latent instincts which we name in one word, sense; common to man and to animals, it places them in relationship with the things exterior to themselves; this sense, or capability of sensation, is merely the general faculty of feeling. No newly-born child would emerge from its torpor if it were not surrounded by material objects which affirm their presence by reacting on him; his first act, at the moment when he perceives his surroundings is the transference of his own mind, until now isolated in itself alone, towards the objects which solicit his attention.

The sense which operates in each child is inward, we name it briefly—sensation—to distinguish it from the five external senses, which are more familiar to us, since even at school their functions and modes of action have been explained to us.

For instance, we know that it is only necessary to touch the strings of an instrument to cause them to vibrate, the vibrations are communicated to the air, and are then called waves of sound; they diffuse themselves with an incredible swiftness in space, advancing and retreating in the manner of the waves of the sea, they reach our ears, touch the auditory nerve, cause the tympanum to vibrate, penetrate to the brain, and give us instantaneously the sensation of sound. And it is to the waves of light passing through the ether, and communicating with the optic nerve of the organ of sight, that we owe the sensation of sight of the objects before us.

The vacant look of a newly-born infant, implies that it has undergone an experience, it has felt something of the nature of a shock; a shock always implies resistance and yielding. In the child it is the human eye becoming conscious of itself amidst the impressions produced on it by the confused sight of external objects, and hearing the

noises which occur around him. This instance is analogous to the vibratory movement of the waves described and even drawn in all manuals on physics.

It is strange that a natural phenomenon which learned men have taken some trouble to analyse, should find expression in the following commonplace phrase. "From the clash of opinions light is generated." If this phrase were not only on our lips, but also implanted in our mind, we should more readily have grasped the physiological fact of sensation.

Sensation plays such an important part in the world of humanity, that all the sciences, both physical and moral, deal with it; but we, who grumble so readily and continuously at feeling either too hot or too cold, probably never enquire what philosophy has to do with purely bodily impressions.

Sensations come to us from without, but they would leave us in a condition of perturbation only, if whilst receiving them we were passive as a mirror on which external objects are reflected; we might have continued to sleep—perchance to dream—if a mental act on our part did not mark the awakening of our intelligence when in contact with the material world, and thus have proved the existence of a power within us hitherto latent, but quite capable of accepting, knowing, and realising sensations which come to us without having been summoned.

We are nearing the solution of the problem. Descartes had asked: How we know. Kant had clearly explained that all our knowledge has its commencement in our senses, which give us pure intuitions, that is to say, a clear direct view of external objects, and he also proved that intelligence would not have been aroused without the aid of material objects. But still greater discoveries awaited Kant.

We feel that nothing in ourselves is so free as thought. It comprehends the whole world, it mounts to the stars,

it descends to the bowels of the earth, arrested perhaps in its path by special objects on which it dwells at will; but although free to encircle the universe, it may not choose its path, thought is obliged—like the sun—to follow one which has been previously traced out for it; of this we can readily convince ourselves.

Space and Time.

All objects of which we become conscious must be placed by us in the imagination side by side in space, and at a distance from ourselves, here or there; as being now present, or as having been, or about to be; but always in succession, *i.e.*, in time, time past, present and future.

According to Kant, Space and Time are two fundamental or inevitable conditions of all sensuous manifestations, and he was the first to observe that they are imposed by so absolute a power that no effort, on our part, would enable us to escape from them, any more than we could avoid seeing the light of day at noon, unless we are either blind or have our eyes shut.

We must make it clear that what we call Space and Time, being forms of our sensuous intuition, do not exist apart from ourselves, or, as Max Müller says, "depend on us as recipients, as perceivers." It is we who say there can be no *Here* without a *There*, and no *Now* without a *Then*; and this is necessary, since we are dependent on the mould of our minds, which work in accordance with their constitutions.

Phenomena.

When opening a dictionary at the letters P. H. E. we should soon arrive at the word Phenomenon and its meaning: whatever is presented to the senses, or affects us physically or morally.

As long as knowledge comes to us only by the way of our senses, it follows that in speaking of affinity, electricity and magnetism as natural phenomena, which are known to us only by their effect on Space and Time, we speak in accordance with our method of representation, and not as they are *in themselves*, since we have not the least idea what these natural forces are *in themselves*. We recognise musical sounds because our ears hear them, and we appreciate colours because our eyes see them; we take cognisance of them as they appear to us, but we are ignorant of both the one and the other as they are in actuality, that is independently of our organs which correspond to them. Thus all the objects that we know —from the manner of our knowledge—become for us phenomena, and the world in which we live is a world of phenomena.

The Categories of the Understanding.

Besides these fundamental forms of sensuous intuition Space and Time, Kant by his analysis of Pure Reason discovered other conditions of our knowledge which could not have come from without. He divides them into twelve distinct classes, and in the phraseology of philosophy they are called Categories of the Understanding. Aristotle had previously arranged a table of Categories, but in his Logic Aristotle concerns himself with the laws of thought in general, the abstraction derived from the practical use made of them; whilst Kant studies the facts first themselves, or first principles, in their relation with certain fixed objects.

The different categories have certain traits in common, not a single one of our thoughts but will find a place in the one or the other. Another feature which characterises all is, that without them no experience would be possible, they rule our understanding. This is very marked in the

category called Plurality. Let us try to think of anything without thinking of it at the same time as one or many, and we shall find it an impossibility. We cannot think of an apple or speak of an apple without picturing more than one; and Max Müller has demonstrated that rational speech is impossible, if we cannot when speaking decide whether the subject of a sentence consists of one or many.

Cause and Effect.

The ideas of *Cause* and *Effect* belong to those first principles that reason draws from itself, and the category of causality is one of the most important. We never experience a sensation, of whatever kind, without attaching it, involuntarily and necessarily, to some external object which we know possesses the qualities corresponding to our sensations. Thus the impressions of heat or cold, sweet or bitter, blue or yellow, evoke immediately the picture of certain objects which are hot or cold, such as fire or ice; or which are sweet or bitter, such as sugar or absinth; or blue, as the sky; or yellow, as the lemon; and these external objects we consider as the causes, and our bodily sensations as the effects.

Axioms.

There are certain universal truths which are self-evident, and were evolved not by experience only or argument, nor science, as they are the natural appanage of common-sense, *e.g.*, such axioms as the following: the whole is greater than the part; a straight line is the shortest distance between two points; each body occupies space; every event occupies time; every effect has a cause. All these are more certain than that the sun will rise to-morrow; common-sense has always known them, and the entire

human race has not waited for the coming of Kant to recognise these facts.

It is strange that the majority of men who know so many things that are true by intuition, often make mistakes when they begin to reflect. They imagine that all things falling under their observation have the power of making themselves known directly, as if they entered an empty space in the imagination which was ready to receive them. Are they ignorant of the fact that in order to think of an external object, it is not necessary to have it in actuality—as it exists in nature—before one's eyes, but that it suffices to imprint its image on the mind? This is very simple, and no doubt common-sense itself would see a truism which might be passed in silence. "What is there extraordinary," common-sense might say, "if in thinking of a lemon, for instance, there should be at once presented to the mind a yellow fruit, of acid flavour, and of a certain shape—a lemon in fact?"

This remark is useful only in showing our natural incapacity for experiencing a sensation, of whatever kind, without connecting it with an external object possessing corresponding attributes to the sensation, and which was its cause.

In any case the truism is not to be ignored, since Aristotle, great philosopher as he was, did not consider it beneath his dignity to employ it. He said: "I think of a stone; the stone is not in my mind, but its form is."

To prove to common-sense that its remark has no connection with the thesis recently laid down, would serve no good purpose. A personal mental act, if it be lawful to personate a quality, would alone convince common-sense of its error; but when once convinced common-sense would then have changed to something higher than it had previously been. It will have mounted up one stage towards reason, and in following this route under the guidance of increasing reason, it will end by under-

standing this truth as demonstrated by Kant: he who cannot distinguish a real object from its representation will never understand the working of the human mind.

The importance of this truth must excuse my digression.

Metaphysics.

The name of Kant will always be intimately connected with the word metaphysics, not because he buried himself in it, as some have supposed who only know his system of philosophy by hearsay; but because his labours consisted in forbidding reason to approach this science which is constantly threatening to invade it, and to get the upper hand by putting itself in its place.

Kant was the first to trace with decision the line of demarcation between the knowledge of which our reason is capable, and that of which it is incapable. No one has drawn so sharp a line between the knowable and the unknowable; this was to explain metaphysics. Alfred Fouillée has defined them as "the critical study of problems which the mind seeks to unravel from a necessity of its nature, although another necessity of its nature renders it incapable of solving them"—such is metaphysics.

This definition is excellent, but for those who make no preparatory studies in philosophy it would present itself rather in this form. If certain questions are of necessity presented to the mind which it finds it impossible to solve, it follows that the mind would necessarily contradict itself. Thus this succinct definition of Fouillée requires to be itself defined.

Noiré, whilst giving more details, is also more exact. "Metaphysics is only explained on the condition that we understand the nature of our power of understanding, in so far as, on the one part, this power is actively manifested in experience, and secondly, in so far as it possesses

anteriorly to any experience, and to anything observed, certain ideas without which there could not possibly or even conceivably, be any impression made in the human mind." I am afraid that this explanation of Noiré will also be lost upon those who are not experienced in the subject.

The explanation of Schopenhauer is not less definite, and is more concise than the two preceding. The foundation upon which all our knowledge and all our science rests, is the incomprehensible—I fancy that the uninitiated will be equally unable to understand this.

It is not surprising. Philosophers speak a language of their own, which must be learnt before it can be understood, which is the case with all languages.

Kant develops this thesis with greater simplicity and clearness. "As long as the human intellect moves in the sphere of the senses and of experience it is safe; this sphere is very vast; it is there that all phenomena may be known which appears in space and time, that is to say, all belonging to the phenomenal world in which we live. But if the intellect rebels against the gaoler which holds it captive in the magic circle, breaks its chains and enters into the region of ideals, it will err."

Kant relates the following anecdote: "A dove, which found great pleasure in spreading its wings, was troubled because this pleasure was of short duration; the simple bird was ignorant of the fact that its structure did not admit of its taking flights such as the swallow enjoys; not divining the real cause of its inability, it blamed the fluid ether whose resisting power it had felt, and thought how much better it would fly 'in vacuo.'" The dove was mistaken.

Kant's crowning merit is having discovered the object of metaphysics not only in the categories of the understanding, without which, as Noiré says, no impression on the human mind would be possible, or even conceivable,

but chiefly in the power, inherent in our nature, of resisting or yielding to impressions. It is this power, according to Kant, which constitutes the transcendental side of our knowledge.

The empirical school of philosophers is tried by Kant's recognition of the transcendental principle in man. Its members accuse the spiritualists of seeking to raise human nature beyond its proper level, and of wishing at the same time to open an inlet for other truths which claim a mysterious character and a superhuman authority. But Kant is the very last person to encourage the thought; on the contrary, through the whole of his philosophy he insists that these *à priori* forms, or antecedent conditions of knowledge, have no authority whatever "except in and for experience," and to use the category of causality, for instance, in order to establish the existence of God is, according to Kant, a philosophical blunder.

"If only we could always remember the first intentions of our words, many philosophical difficulties would vanish." In Greek οἶδα meant originally, I have seen, and therefore I know. In a court of justice the witness who says, "I saw" can hardly say anything more convincing. To apply such a word to our knowledge of causes, forces, and faculties would be a solecism—to apply it to God would be self-contradictory.

Each of the abstract definitions of metaphysics given by Alfred Fouillée, Noiré, and Schopenhauer contains the leading conception of the subject; if presented in more simple language it would be within the comprehension of all; our understanding is blind to all with which it is not made acquainted by intuition derived from experience. Those things for which we have a strong desire, of which we have a certain conviction, but which are outside the sphere of our actual life, "for these," as Max Müller says in this connection, "we want another word which should mean—I have not seen and yet I know, and that is—

faith."[1] Our senses may not always authorise us to affirm their reality. God and the future life are not made the subjects of phenomena.

All that I have said as to what distinguishes knowledge acquired by the senses from that which is anterior to all experience (Kant was the first to make this distinction), might seem simple to those heedless minds which are surprised at nothing, but complicated and confused to minds however little attentive, and quite useless to the rest of us. There may be something of truth in each of these primitive and superficial estimations, but the whole truth is that all this is very scientific, so scientific as to require a Kant to enable those who reflect to give a lucid account of it.

It was by the help of this learned science that Kant broke the serried ranks of his antagonists. Confronted by two philosophical opinions, both of which he considered erroneous, he proved to the materialists Condillac, Hume, and Locke, that there is something within us which could never have been supplied from without, which therefore belongs to our ego, that is to say to the subject thinking and not to the object thought of, or matter; then turning against the Idealists of the time of Berkeley, he shows that there is something without us which could never have been supplied from within; and when he proved that intellect and matter are correlative, that they exist for each other, depend on each other, form together a whole that should never have been torn asunder, two streams of philosophic thought, which had been running in separate beds, met for the first time.

The existence of the phenomenal world being proved by the irrefragable testimony of the senses, is admitted also by reason, and, as a necessary consequence, another, not only in appearance, but which *will be*, assuredly; as sound is independent of our hearing, as material objects are independent of our sight; for though Kant

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 609.

declares our inability to know objects as they are in themselves, he does not deny their existence, since he says, "We should be capable, if not of knowing things as they are in themselves, at least of knowing them as they are to us, otherwise we should arrive at the irrational conclusion, that there may be appearances without something that appears."

Kant undertook to make an exact science of the necessary and universal ideas of the human mind, such as logic and mathematics, which are parts of human knowledge; to this end he wrote *Critique of Pure Reason*, afterwards he composed another work, the *Critique of Practical Reason*. Practical reason may also be called pure, in as much as it does not allow itself to be influenced by anything but what proceeds from itself, and reason becomes practical when it seeks an independent principle which determines the will. This principle is formulated by Kant in the following terms: "Let each individual follow commands which may be considered as a universal law imposed alike on all human beings."

This law, which man possesses in his conscience, does not stop half way in its exactions from man since it aims at perfection, it commands man to love his neighbour, and to do good even to his enemy. To love and to do acts of kindness when pleasant to oneself is natural, and requires no command, but, otherwise, a law is required to coerce the will, the man who submits is free, since he can choose to infringe or to obey it; obedience to the moral law constitutes duty, which must be accomplished because it is our duty, and embodies the satisfaction felt in its performance.

Man is under an obligation to be moral and to do his duty, but not necessarily to be happy, yet he demands happiness. The union of virtue and happiness being the *summum bonum*, we must acknowledge the existence of

a power external to ourselves, endowed with intellect and will, which makes this union possible; this power is known to us by the name of God. The perfect good is holiness; this life is too short to enable us to attain to it in its perfection, it is therefore a necessity that our life should be prolonged beyond the term of years spent on this earth, thus we are assured of the survival of the soul after what we term death.

Thus Kant speaks in his *Critique of Practical Reason.*

I may now be permitted to speak and give my own opinion. I hear the Positivist perhaps say: "This result might be considered conceivable if all that has been previously said were true; but to infer from the desire for happiness that a supernatural power must infallibly satisfy it might be a hallucination, or at least a hypothesis." If this were so we need not deride hypotheses; in the domain of human knowledge reason would not be itself if it never made ventures in scientific discoveries; its path starts from the possible in making excursions from the known to the unknown, in going from darkness to light—hence then hypothesis.

There is also this fact to notice, some of the most important of our acts are not guided by reason, it acts as a spectator; for instance, reason is not active when we have perception of an object, and intuitions occur in us without the intervention of reason.

This was well understood by certain men who have come forward from time to time from the multitude, the bearers of inspired messages to the world; they have spoken of those things which "eye hath not seen nor ear heard," and they were hard to be understood of the people; but each one alike said: "I give no proof of the truth of what I assert; do as I say, and you will know the truth of my words."

There remains little more to be said on the subject of

Kant. There is a serious omission in the system of this profound thinker.

Nothing has so stopped the progress of Darwin's great conception as the injudicious efforts of his so-called disciples to bring it to perfection. Instead of correcting their chief, they should have weighed thoughtfully all Kant's arguments against the materialism of his adversaries, and have sought to refute them; if they had succeeded in proving that Kant makes a mistake when he admits that there is in man a principle quite distinct from his body, they would have been authorised in replacing Darwin's theory by their own; if they had not succeeded, Darwin and his theory would have remained unshaken, but they would be annihilated.

Max Müller examines the question from another point of view. "We admit that as we know nothing, except by analogy, of the mind of animals, we could not with the weapons that Kant has placed in our hands, make head against the assertion that they might possess, for all we know, the same forms of sensuous intuition and the same categories of the understanding which we possess. Nothing, therefore, could have been said from a purely philosophical point of view, against treating man as a mere variety of some other genus of animals."[1] But as the origin of language was to Kant less than a secondary question—it might almost be said to have no existence for him—it belongs to the science of language to show, what Kant had never shown, that for all human knowledge not only were percepts and concepts necessary, but also names. How was it that it did not occur to Kant since he perceived that there were mathematics of the forms or manifestations of sensation, namely, time or duration and space? He said well: Each object of which we think is attached in time or space to another; this can only be done by the use of such indications as *now, then, here, there*; and he

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 125.

saw in this gradation of perception, the first step towards the act of counting, that is to say of reasoning, and consequently of speaking; all of which was comprehended by the Greeks in their word Logos. As an instance the word *cent* exists in every language, but *cent* in French consists only of four letters placed side by side one after the other, and would never be anything else to us if we could not count; but to count is to add and to take away, that is to say, addition and subtraction, thus to conceive and name; in order to possess a hundred objects, it does not suffice to see them only, it is necessary to count them up to the hundred.

These two works of Kant's, the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* appear to emanate from two different pens; in the first, whatever is asserted is proved. The second work is dictated by a personal experience; Kant affirms that thus it is and that it cannot be otherwise. But here again I perceive a lack, a want, if not from the believer's point of view, yet from that of those people who ask what could be the religion of our primitive ancestors; personal experience is not expressed as Kant expresses it, unless it is the result of a long series of meditations and examinations of conscience; in a word, experiences which have been transmitted from generation to generation. This is a religion that has achieved much, it is not that form of it which would be found amongst the generality of men, and still less would it spring to life in the heart of primitive man.

But here are two positivist philosophers who undertake to solve this great problem: they consider reason as ready with a reply to those who seek to know the meaning of God and of religion, two concepts which are inseparable, the one from the other; and even ready to explain how these two concepts have penetrated into the consciousness of all human beings. These philosophers speak no doubt from experience, for having questioned their reason it

has replied to them: God and religion form one conception.

The first explanation is — man is conscious of his condition; he is possessed with the desire of happiness, and is unable to realise it; but his imagination represents to him another state in which the desire of happiness will exist and in which there will be no obstacle to its realisation; the first of these states is real, the other visible to the mind's eye; they are therefore not identical; to will and not to have the power is to be man; to will and to be omnipotent is to be God. Little by little man understands that these two states of conditions having been conceived by the same mind, have the same origin; the notion fixes itself firmly in his mind that the two states seem gradually to approach each other, and are not always distinguishable; the union of desire and power is the Divine essence; the growing consciousness of this union is religion, which dawns and increases in man.

Man does not desire immortality because he believes in it, nor because it is demonstrable; but he believes in it and demonstrates its existence because he desires it. The sentence, "God sees all," does not mean, so we are told, what it appears to mean; it expresses the feeling God knows all of which man is ignorant, but which he fain would know; and the sentence, "God is beneficence," is the cry of man who desires happiness. All the predicates applied by man to the Deity in the course of history and humanity have never, in the opinion of philosophers, had any other origin than the representation of our wishes.

But the inner combat, which has been long and unhappy, with no truce, has exhausted man's powers, and when the despondency checks, and at times almost paralyses his flight after happiness, the instinct of self-preservation leads him towards religion; as this instinct with the incapacity of satisfying it is inseparable in

man, motives of religion are renewed continually in each individual and consequently in the multitude.

God and religion, *i.e.* the outward sign of our union with God, yet emanates from ourselves. This system, of which Feuerbach is the exponent, has many followers amongst the Positivists.

The second explanation comes from a learned member of the extreme Positivist school in Germany; but, as Max Müller says, it would be impossible to represent religion in a worse light . . . "and it would be difficult to take a lower view of it."[1] According to Dr Gruppe, religion exists simply because it satisfies certain selfish instincts of man. He notices two. The first instinct is common to all organic beings; it tends towards the preservation of the individual, and consequently to that of the race; it is elementary, and acts from within outwards. The second instinct belongs only to man taken collectively, and has vitality only in numbers; it belongs to a more advanced stage, and acts from without inwardly. Man instinctively grasps the greatest amount of happiness possible; he therefore seeks that which he considers his greatest good, not after the fashion of the beasts, but in his own way.

"We call religious belief," says Dr Gruppe, "a belief in an indefinable state or being which we strive to bring into our sphere, and to render permanent by means of sacrificial ceremonies, prayers, penances, and self-denial."[2]

This indefinable something, the professor considers, would never have appeared in the world without an impulsion, however light; an accidental movement, a casual combination of a disordered brain, and a personality endowed with a certain amount of energy, would have sufficed to make a single individual the author of an idea totally opposed to man's good possession common sense, and the originator of a movement which must find in the

[1] *Natural Religion*, pp. 74, 77. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 76.

surroundings in which it came to life, all facilities for its indefinite perpetuation. It is of no consequence whether this mental phenomenon has been produced in one individual or in more; figures are of little account in the matter. If this disease called hallucination [1] had remained confined in the circumscribed sphere of one individual or a few, a personal intelligent effort might have overcome it, but being contagious and spreading amongst the people it became impossible to conquer it. The natural laws of reason once violated, the perturbed mind created a succession of sophistical arguments which appeared to satisfy the ineradicable desire for happiness in man; and an incredibly tenacious opposition on the side of error assumed menacing proportions. If the belief that the sun, instead of disappearing each night below the horizon, would continue to shine during the night could in any way contribute to the happiness of mankind, men would slowly but surely have accepted it.

The man who isolates himself from his fellow men and becomes self-absorbed is peculiarly apt to create for himself mental pictures which give him pleasure; if, then, joy is indispensable to man's existence, the religion which gives it, or the illusion of it, enables him to forget the tangible world, and substitute an imaginary one peopled with phantoms. But the solitary man is a rare phenomenon, and we judge favourably those men who live in the midst of their social surroundings, and whose community of ideas and sentiments has made a homogeneous whole, during many centuries. Each one will find means to develop his personal faculties, and to strengthen his power of resistance in the struggle of all against all, and the good which is illusive in the solitary man becomes a benefit to the members of the society.

[1] It is not surprising that Max Müller says, "We are not likely to allow ourselves to be persuaded by Dr Gruppe that the only source of religion all over the world was hallucination."—*Anthropological Religion*, p. 126.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

Religion might possibly cease to exist, in Gruppe's opinion, were it not for the inequalities of man's condition, and for the troubles which follow him; but the action of religion is helpful to society.[1] It tells the poor not to hanker after riches which are not lasting. It mirrors for them images of future compensations, thus the rich and the noble here are enabled to enjoy their pleasures on earth in safety. In its name bright hopes are built up for the wretched, and it takes its stand in front of the palaces of the rich; sedatives are prescribed for incurables, and rich foods for those who can pay for them. Charity is preached to the compassionate, and persecutions to the fanatics: at times it encourages the use of arts and sciences; at times it warns its followers not to love overmuch the beautiful in art, nor to seek too earnestly the truth in science. But the outcome of this religion, whether good or the reverse, is of small importance compared with the benefits it renders to society. It is the support of the civil and moral law, and in lighting the hymeneal torch it adds to the sanctity of families.

Without attributing selfish motives, in the lowest sense, to the founders of the various religions and sects which flourish in our midst, Gruppe considers all of them unconscious egoists; he thinks that had they been calm psychologists, which sincere prophets are not, they would have recognised in themselves the attraction that glory had for them; but in that case they would not have remained faithful unto the death, and the power of communicating their own spirit and force to their adherents would have failed them. Gruppe distinguishes with great keenness the reflex action of our desire for happiness, which is no other than the instinct of self-preservation, from the motives which are sufficient to inspire certain enthusiasts

[1] Max Müller remarks: "His (Dr Gruppe's) definition of religion is at all events too narrow; it might possibly be found to apply to religion, not in its original, but in its most depraved state."—*Natural Religion*, p. 77. —TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

to found new religions; these two things are in reality quite distinct, although they may act in concert; the desire for universal and permanent happiness paves the way for the manifestation of individual enthusiasm; he asserts that religions, while professing to found a new kingdom of heaven, only succeed in inheriting the kingdom of this world.

The struggle between an extreme positivism and a true idealism is a sight that energises earnest men. Evidently impressed by the exposition of the spiritualist doctrine, the learned doctor remarks: "The first perception of the infinite, of law and order in nature, communicated an impulse to the mind of man; but this force, when once in movement, did not slacken before having called forth in our ancestors the conviction that all is right and good, and the hope—even more than hope—that all would be right and good. Such is the celebrated system of Max Müller. It is not only the great personal worth of the author that obliges us to give it close consideration, but also the fact that this system is the most eloquent exposition of an idea which has also been expressed by other writers in some remarkable works on the history of religions. The position in which Max Müller has placed himself for a starting-point is, from a positivist point of view, impregnable."

This commendation, which is particularly striking, coming as it does from one of Max Müller's fiercest adversaries, I have quoted word for word.

Gruppe is not only a positivist philosopher, but also learned in Eastern languages and literature, and a clever mythologist; it would have been better had he confined himself to fields of labour with which he was acquainted. But as he admits that there is psychological and spontaneous thought in man, side by side with the rational, he cannot but acknowlege the right of humanity to say what it thinks. There are certain literary documents which

show us what the human mind has thought in all ages and in all places, and we are of opinion that these sentiments have not varied.

It is said that an universal belief in any fact is not a proof of the existence of this fact, and that consequently the conception of super-sensible things need have no real basis; the observation is just; I shall reply to it by a question. Is it possible to demonstrate that this belief in things that cannot be proved is not only universal but even inevitable? If it were possible much would be gained. In geometrical calculations it is sufficient to know that three dimensions only exist,—at least in this world—that the straight line is the shortest, that two parallel lines never meet; it should suffice to know that in this world belief, whether rational or illusory, in one or more divinities, is inevitable for men constituted as we are.

Our first fathers no doubt pictured a large space situated on the further side of all that they could see, and we know how their imagination peopled it with confused images, either hidden, or seen in the visible phenomena.

These flights of fancy, which may have lasted thousands of centuries, became crystallised at last in the mythologies of all peoples, and it is these mythologies by which we gain access to this initial stage in the life of humanity, and which preserves for us the traces of this eternal truth amidst many extravagances of the fancy misled by language, which guided their first steps. There is a petrified philosophy in mythology.

Since history and legend, in one form or another, have voiced the feelings called religion, these feelings, variously interpreted, have changed their aspect from age to age, and from country to country; as long as we have not traced the stream to its source, the question, as to the manner in which the conception of God had birth in the human mind, will always be before us.

We take man at the time when he had recently appeared on the earth, his sole possession being his five senses, which place him in contact with the external world. We must distinguish between two classes of senses; those of touch, scent, and taste being more evident; from the evolutionist's point of view the sense of touch has the largest share in the building up of the human edifice which arose later; its use is chiefly connected with the hands, and has thus given us the word *manifest*; that which we call certainty hardly exists for us apart from what is manifest. The two other senses, sight and hearing, are less sure, and have frequently to be verified by those first named.

The objects of which we obtain knowledge by means of our senses can be divided into tangible, semi-tangible and intangible. The first are, for instance, a stone, a bone, a fruit, the skin of an animal, these can be touched as it were all round, and we are able to assert their reality. The second, the semi-tangible, might be a river, a mountain, the earth, a tree. We stand by the banks of a river and dip our hand in the small volume of water passing away before our eyes; we can also touch the ground on which we are standing, also the trunk of the tree beneath which we are sitting; but it is only an insignificant part of which we assert the reality by touching it, all the other parts remain unknown to us; for the river itself consists of a large mass of waters springing from a source which is not seen and flowing towards a spot which we may never see; we are told that the earth is in the shape of a globe, and that this globe is suspended in air, which fact it would be difficult to verify; the tree is small in comparison with the river and the earth, and yet how little we know of it, whence come its buds, and its leaves, and the sap which rises each spring in the branches? We say of a beam that it is dead wood, but of the tree we say that it grows and lives; what is this

life of the tree? We are in the presence of the unknown. These are samples of semi-tangible objects. The sense of touch has no place with regard to the sky, the stars, the clouds, the winds; those are intangible objects, which we see and feel without knowing them by personal grasp; the proof of their existence is also in the fact that years of work are required to know astronomy and meteorology.

We now have primitive man provided with fine senses, in presence of these natural phenomena, and the problem to be solved is this: How is it that this man is able to think and to speak of things which are not finite, finite things being the only ones of which his senses make him cognisant?

"I have before me," says Max Müller, "a school of philosophy adverse to my views; I am warned that nothing I say will be accepted, unless I submit to the conditions imposed on me. I am told: 'You pretend to prove that man can know that God exists; whereas we affirm that the great triumph of our age is that we have proved that religion is an illusion. All knowledge must pass through two gates, the gate of the senses and the gate of reason, consequently religious knowledge even can enter by no other gate.' In this way does positivism bar the entrance which Kant left open, who in his definition of religion considered morality the basis of it, which with him presupposed the existence of God. Positivism refuses to hear a psychological and historical explanation of one of the greatest psychological and religious facts—namely, religion; it stops its ears when we say *Nihil est in fide quod non ante fuerit in sensu*; but we are not discouraged by the absurdity of imagining that by shutting our eyes, we can annihilate facts; we accept the struggle on the common ground on which the positivist and we have decided to fight; we also agree to use the weapons chosen for us. Let us inspect the battlefield and measure

the ground. Both sides seem in accord that all consciousness begins with sensuous perception, with what we feel, and hear, and see; what is likewise granted is that out of this we construct what may be called conceptual knowledge, consisting of collective and abstract concepts. The conditions of the combat are fixed; at the two gates of the senses and reason we take our stand; whatever claims to have entered in by any other gate, whether that gate be called primeval revelation, or religious instinct,[1] must be rejected as contraband of thought; and whatever claims to have entered in by the gate of reason without having first passed through the gate of the senses, will equally be rejected, as without sufficient warrant." [2]

[1] *Natural Religion*, p. 194.

[2] Max Müller does not exclude faith in making this statement, which also occurs in his work *The Origin and Growth of Religion*, as on the next page he says, "What we call sense, reason, and faith are three functions of one and the same perceptive self."—*Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 227.

CHAPTER X

THE VEDIC HYMNS

It has been possible to ascertain that the first words pronounced by the most ancient members of the Aryan family are connected by a thread of continuity to those which we use to-day in all languages, whether living or dead; our family would not be a portion of the entire human race, if this continuity of thought did not form a constituent part of the mental equipment of all the other families; but as no others possess in an equal degree with ourselves the archives sufficiently extensive to contain indication of the gradual development of human speech, such as the Veda furnishes, that is the authority to which Max Müller appeals in all his works. And it is precisely because there has been no cessation in the continuity of human thought, that the historical method is the only one capable of linking us with the primitive Aryans; our work will consist in collecting tokens of the long pilgrimage undertaken by our ancestors, and with which we desire to be associated, and which those who come after us must also undertake.

"No doubt, between the first daybreak of human thought and the first hymns of praise of the Rig-Veda, composed in the most perfect metre and the most polished language, there may be, nay, there must be a gap that can only be measured by generations, by hundreds, aye, by thousands of years."[1] The exodus and separation of the Aryan family, belonging as it does to a prehistoric epoch and therefore unchronicled, and the Vedic Hymns—the

[1] Max Müller, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 231.

work of many centuries—having been completed and collected together some hundreds of years before our present era, thus at a time relatively recent, that which constitutes their chief claim to great antiquity in our eyes is that the Hindoo poets or rishis incorporated certain thoughts and words in them whose roots threw out shoots in the primitive Aryan soil before the dispersion of its members.

The period of the life of humanity into which the hymns enable us to penetrate, is the most ancient of which mention is made. The rishis sing in Sanscrit of thoughts conceived in the hidden recesses of souls before they awoke to the consciousness of that concept to which the name of God alone can be applied, before these same people pictured in their imagination those whom they named gods, before the appearance of myths and mythological fables, and before the Sanscrit language existed.

Our Aryan ancestors had not left the cradle of their race when their language, whatever it may have been, possessed the root *dyu* and *div*, two cognate words meaning to shine. The Veda shows that many things were bright to the Vedic poets, the heaven, dawn, the stars and several other things, such as the rivers, spring, the fields, the eyes of man, all that would have the effect on us of being smiling, flourishing, and rejoicing in life; and from this root the word *deva* was formed. Neither in Greek nor in Latin, nor in any living language can a word be found which exactly expresses *deva*; Greek dictionaries translate it by Theos, in the same way as we translate Theos by God; but if—dictionary in hand—we put the word God in certain passages in the hymns where this word is found, we should sometimes commit a mental anachronism of a thousand years. At the time of the first Aryans, gods, in one sense of the word, did not exist; they were slowly struggling into being; it was therefore impossible for man to form any conception of them even in dreams. As this word *deva* changes its signification so frequently, not only in

the most ancient Brahmanic poems, but also in works of a later date, we can only obtain even an approximate idea of its meaning by writing its history, beginning from its etymology and ending with its latest definition; but it is not necessary to undertake this philological labour, and I shall content myself by showing that originally *deva* denoted a quality common to many natural phenomena, that of light, and therefore *deva* was a general term.

Man at first received this impression passively, as animals would, but by his nature he could not rest there; all the phenomena surrounding him were animated, the most marvellous and those of peculiar intensity moved in the upper regions of the firmament; in the midst of these general movements the mind of man could not alone be inactive, and thought and speech—that is reason—inevitably vindicated their right to activity; names were given to all things. The Aryan root *svar* or *sval*, which signified to shine, to sparkle, and to heat, produced a Sanscrit substantive meaning sometimes sun and sometimes the sky.

The Hindoo poets, the authors of these hymns, gave various names to the sun, according to the task it accomplished; and each name reproduced the salient feature of the task. The sun when rising was Mitra = friend; as it advances on its journey, giving new life, it is Savitar = bringing forth, or leading day; the vivifying sun; when it collects the clouds and sends rain on the earth, it is Indra, from *ind-u* = drops; and it continues to be Indra when its rays attain their zenith and reach their greatest splendour; for no plant flourishes without the combined action of light and humidity; the sun is Vishnu when it makes "its three strides" in the vault of heaven, its position in the morning, at noon, and in the evening; it is Varuna—the all embracing—when it envelops itself in clouds as in a shroud, and the sky darkens. Some phenomena descended on man from above, such as thunder-bolts, winds, storms; the storms that came unexpectedly, dealing

destruction as they passed received the name of Maruts—from the root *Mar*—and with the meaning of those who strike or beat to death; the thunder was called Rudra = he who roars; the wind was Vayu = he who blows.

All these names indicated that which could be seen and that which could be heard; the invisible things remained unnamed; how was it possible for man to name that of which he was ignorant (except that they had a real existence), he who could only conceive a name after having seen a certain feature or quality in the object? They made use therefore of the names they already knew, and they rang the changes on the storm, the fire, and the firmament, which names they borrowed. Jacob's prayer, which arose in the darkness when he was wrestling with a great Unknown, "Tell me, I pray thee, thy name," must have been, in the early ages, the question of all humanity; but uttered under a thousand varying forms, and as, at the beginning, each name was imperfect, since it expressed only one side of the object, every additional name denoted a step forward, and every fresh check experienced by the mind in its search after accurate names only stimulated it to look elsewhere.

The first germ of the concept of law and order appears in the minds of the poets, and to this they give the name of *Rita*. This word has no equivalent in our languages, and translators are uncertain as to the meaning attached to it by the rishis. Pliant and full of capability, there seems no word more fitted to reflect new shades of thought; and in our efforts to understand it conjecture is much called into play, from the fact that we have to transfuse ancient thought into modern forms; in that process some violence is inevitable. Max Müller supposes, from etymological reasons, that Rita originally was used to express the regular movement of the heavenly bodies, and the path which they followed daily, from the one point of the heavens to the other, and he translates *Rita* by the

"right path." "If we remember how many of the ancient sacrifices in India depended on the course of the sun, how there were daily sacrifices, at the rising of the sun, at noon, and at the setting of the sun; how there were offerings for the full moon and the new moon, we may well understand how the sacrifice itself came in time to be called the path of Rita."[1] Rita expresses all that is right, good, and true, and Anrita was used for whatever is false, evil, and untrue; thus the Hindoos laid it down as an axiom that there was an universal law in the world equally binding on the physical phenomena and on conscious beings, such as themselves; and it was this law which ruled the times of the sacrifices to be offered to the divine powers; and this intuitive perception of law and order, which is the foundation of the ancient faith of the Asiatic Aryans, is far more important than all the histories of Savitar, Mitra, Rudra, and Indra, which are recounted at a later period of the gods of India. This belief in Rita, in law and order, as revealed in the unvarying movement of the stars, or manifested in the unvarying number of the petals, and stamens, and pistils of the smallest plant, was a grand thing; it was all the difference between a chaos and a cosmos, between the blind play of chance and a well defined plan. We have become so familiarised with the idea of a fundamental law, that it now often occupies us less than many of the secondary laws or causes; and yet our philosophers often find themselves at fault when they endeavour to give an exact idea of this primary law; but to the ancient prophets it must have been infinitely more perplexing, though also infinitely more important in their gropings after *terra firma* on which to plant their feet. The rishis are indefatigable in pointing to the straight path, or Rita, followed by the day and night; and because the gods have themselves followed this path, they have the strength to triumph over the powers of darkness, and

[1] Max Müller, *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 250.

to those who ask for it they grant the grace to walk in the same road.

"O Indra, lead us on the path of Rita, on the right path over all evils."[1]

To walk with regularity in the path of duty, imitating the example of the astral bodies, or following step by step the sun which never deviates from its orbit, cannot be an idea foreign to humanity since it is equally familiar to the primitive races and the most elevated minds. Cicero said of himself that he was born not only to contemplate the order of the heavenly bodies, but to imitate this order in his own conduct; this great orator, although he was ignorant of the existence of the Vedic hymns, spoke after the same manner as the rishis; and the Maoris are inspired neither by Cicero nor the Hindoo poets, when they send forth their energetic cry, "Wait, wait, O sun, we will go with thee."

To our first ancestors nothing in nature could have been indifferent; all that they perceived must have come upon them as a continual surprise; the Vedic hymns show that our surmise is correct. An irresistible force led them continually to investigate and interrogate those apparitions which, by their strangeness and grandeur, were so striking, and to which they gave the names of the thunderers, the rainers, the pounders or storm gods; no voice replied to their questions; absolute silence reigned around them; the limits of the known confronted them. Gradually a different perception forced itself upon them, whether consciously or unconsciously; all limits have two sides, the one towards ourselves, the other towards the beyond; they were ignorant of what existed beyond, but they believed it to be there, since the further boundaries came in contact with it. They wished to draw near to it in order to examine it close at hand, but in what direction should they advance?

[1] *Rig-Veda*, X. 133. 6.

The sentiments which the sun and its forerunners awoke in our ancestors must remain for ever beyond our powers of imagination; the rising of this luminary is to us the result of a physical law, and is not considered more extraordinary than the birth of a child in a large family; we know that the dawn is the reflection of the sun's rays in the matutinal vapours; we have even learnt to calculate the time of its duration in different climates; but the assurance with which we say, "The sun will rise to-morrow, the day after to-morrow, every day," our ancestors never possessed, and it was this vast unknown domain, behind the known, that from the very first supplied the human mind with the impetus required to cause it to seek, to discover, what there could be beyond the visible world.

As nothing seems to be so far apart as the two points of the horizon where the light of day appears and where he sets, it is there that the rishis look for a solution of the problem of the beyond.[1]

"That whence the sun rises, and that where he sets, that I believe is the oldest, and no one goes beyond."[2]

The poets gave the name Aditi to the dawn. Aditi is derived from *diti*, binding and bond, with the negative particle *a*; thus at first *Aditi* meant that which is without bonds, not chained, not enclosed, infinite. But their imagination soon carried the poets beyond the dawn itself, that came and went, but there remained always behind the dawn that heaving sea of light or fire from which she springs; thus Aditi herself could not be grasped by the senses. Was not this the visible infinite?

At this point the mind of the rishis conceived an

[1] "To the ancient seers the dawn seemed to open the golden gates of another world, and while these gates were open for the sun to pass in triumph, their eyes and their minds strove in their childish way to pierce beyond the limits of this finite world."—*Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 235.

[2] *Atharva-Veda*, X. 8. 16.

original and striking idea, at the sight of the sun following his path and touching two opposite points of the horizon; they said that arrived at the centre of its course at the zenith, Indra from thence could see at the same time Diti and Aditi—"That is what is yonder and what is here, what is infinite and what is finite, what is mortal and what is immortal."[1]

Whilst searching increasingly for what he had not yet found, man had mastered two ideas, those of law, and the beyond or the infinite, though not understanding the accurate meaning of these words; on these two points his mind was at rest. These two possessions once acquired could not be taken from him; in Aditi—which is limitless—could be found a home for things which had no bounds, and it could furnish an answer to all questions; and Rita, the order which rules the movements of the celestial bodies, is at the same time an incentive and a promise. A violent convulsion of nature may have alarmed the hearts of men, but the thought occurs to them, "This cannot last always."[2]

"Sun and moon move in regular succession—that we may see, Indra, and believe."[3]

Without fear there could have been no hope, without hope there could have been no faith.

Śraddhâ, an ancient Aryan word used before the dispersion of the various members of the family, is the same as the Latin Credo. Where the Romans said *credidi* the Brahmans said *śraddadhau*; where the Romans said *creditum*, the Brahmans said *śraddhitam*. The germ of

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 35. 2.

[2] Max Müller's words on the subject are as follows: "These two concepts (the infinite, and order and law), which sooner or later must be taken in and minded by every human being, were at first no more than an impulse, but their impulsive force would not rest till it had beaten into the minds of the fathers of our race the deep and indelible impression that 'all is right,' and filled them with a hope, and more than a hope, that 'all will be right.'"—*Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 259.

[3] *Rig-Veda*, I. 102. 2.

the faculty of faith, therefore, must have existed in the earliest strata of thought and language, since without the first glimpses of faith in the soul, there could have been no word for "to believe."

As auxiliary verbs were lacking at first, the early Aryans found it very difficult to say of a thing that it is or is not; but they possessed the root *as*, which originally meant *to breathe*, and its simplest derivation was *as-u*—breath. Man having discovered in all the natural phenomena an activity resembling his own, said of the moon that it measures, of the river that it runs, of the sun that it rises and sets; thus each of these had certain activities peculiar to itself. Was there nothing common to all? Doubtless, since an action can be found which is shared equally by man and all animals, the act of breathing is common to all, so that our fathers when wishing to affirm that something existed said that it breathed.

Man turns his gaze from the things that surround him to himself; he feels superior to the physical phenomena, to the rivers, to the mountains. He possesses another nature to that of the sun, of the stars. He has discovered something in himself that is more than his body. What is it? how is he to name it? He saw his father or his mother, who had formerly been in every respect like himself, prostrate, without motion, without speech. What had happened? What was it that had left them? Knowing the root *as*, and its derivative *as-u*, he called it from the first breath, then spirit, which originally meant nothing more than the air absorbed by the lungs, from which it is exhaled as breath. Nothing constrained our ancestors to believe that because they had seen their parents die and their bodies decay, it must follow that what had hitherto animated them was now annihilated. This notion may have entered the brain of a philosopher, but man in his primitive simplicity, though doubtless terrified at the sight of death, would naturally incline to the belief that

what he had known and loved, and had called by the names of father and mother, must still exist somewhere, although not in the body. The breath had not been seen to decay. What had become of it? Various answers were given to this question, at divers times and in divers countries. They were all equally probable; no objections could be made to them, but neither was there proof; they are beyond the reach of proof. "The best answer was perhaps that contained in the most ancient Greek language and mythology, that the souls had gone to the house of the Invisible, of *Aides*. No one has ever said anything truer."

From the depths of the eastern sky Aditi arises each morning. To the eyes of the ancient seers the dawn seemed to open the gates of another world into which they begged to enter—into the abode of the gods. We can understand that as the sun and all the solar deities rise from the east, Aditi was said to be the mother of Mitra, Vishnu, Savitar, and Varuna. Another conception also arose, that the east being the abode of the bright gods, would also become the home of those parents and friends who died, "the blessed departed who would join the company of the gods that they might be transferred to the east."[1] Aditi thus embodied the mystery of life and death; and was the "Mot de l'Énigme" of our existence. All the theogony and primitive philosophy of the Aryan were concentrated in the dawn. Those souls who participate with Aditi in the "birthplace of the Immortals" sometimes share the worship offered by their children who are still on the earth. One off-shoot of this ancient worship still survives, and the popularity of the festival of the 1st of November in certain countries testifies that the homage rendered to the memory of the dead is a necessity of the human heart. And certainly those whom we are accustomed to speak of as dead are most surely living. The

[1] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 238.

rishis desired to contemplate their faces, and one of them, speaking for all, cried: "Who will give us back to the great Aditi, that I may see father and mother?"[1]

All peoples have desired to know which part of the human body is the seat of the soul and of life; the dictionaries of all languages, whether spoken by civilised or uncivilised people, show that the words blood, heart, chest, reins and breath have all been used to indicate the seat of life, soul, thought, and the affections. Amongst the Maoris, the words used for the internal organs mean at the same time the heart, and the centre of joy and sorrow; the seat of conscience and of desires and the will; it is strange that the brain, which we often look upon as the cradle of thought, is not found in the psychological nomenclature of the ancient world. The expression which we find in the Bible, "The blood is the life," and in other languages besides Hebrew, inspired many religious and superstitious acts. It is singular that in one of the dialects spoken in the south of India, Tamil, the word used for soul has the sense of leaper or dancer; these are efforts to express that which moves within us. We are here not amongst learned metaphysicians, but concerned with simple children of nature; but the greatest philosophers have at no time more clearly defined the soul than by describing it as that which moves of itself, but is not moved.

Our language is so rich in abstract terms, derived from a small number of concrete words, that we are not aware how often we use the old material words to express purely mental states or conditions; for instance we speak of taking things to heart, or learning verses by heart, without thinking of the heart that beats within our breasts.

Fire has always occupied a prominent position in the imagination of all people, of all nations; but with the exception of the Hindoos none have left traditions which

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 24. 1.

enable us to transport ourselves to the simplest beginnings of the fire upon the hearth, and nothing more. Heracleitus already mentions fire as everlasting or immortal, and the "origin of all things, a higher conception than that of the gods of the populace whom Heracleitus tolerated, though he did not believe in them. 'Neither one of the gods,' he declares, 'nor of men has made this world, . . . it always was and will be, ever-living fire, catching forms and consuming them.'"[1] Heracleitus imagined that he knew what was fire; but the rishis speak with less assurance; at first they express their astonishment at the appearance of fire, it is one of the physical apparitions which impressed them the most, although of all the devas fire seemed the one most readily known, since it had its dwelling with men, it was within reach of the hand, could be touched, but as it burnt the fingers the experiment was only made once. Although seen so near at hand fire remained a great enigma; our ancestors could not understand how it could unite in itself at the same time such good and such destructive qualities. It warmed the members numbed by cold, at night it lighted the hut as if the sun were in it, yet at times it destroyed suddenly whole forests; it seemed everywhere; when the thunder rolled, fire escaped from a dark cloud like a flash; it appeared as a spark when two flints were struck or two branches of wood rubbed together; but its chief characteristic was its excessive mobility, nothing in nature could compare with the velocity of its movements.

The Aryans at that time possessed a root *ag*, which meant going, marching, leading, running, forcing, pushing, chasing, and jumping, and gives generally an idea of quick movement, and as fire moved perpetually, our ancestors made use of this root *ag*, and called fire *agni*; this Sanscrit word—which amongst many others was the most popular—still survives in the Latin, as *ignis*, in Lithuania

[1] *Physical Religion*, p. 245.

as *ugni*, in old Slavonic, as *ogni*; another Sanscrit name for fire is *vah-ni*, coming from the same root which we have in *veho* and *vehemens*, and it meant originally what moves about quickly.

I have collected a few of the characteristic traits attributed by the rishis to the deva Agni.

"How did he come—living—from pieces of dead wood? How is he produced from two stones? His mother does not nourish him, how does he grow so rapidly, and proceed at once to do his work? He whom nothing resists—like the heavenly thunderbolt—like a hurled weapon. Agni, in a moment, does violence to the trees of the forest; he prostrates them — all that moves — that which stands, trembles before him—making the herbs his food—he licks the garment of the earth—he nourishes himself. Turning about with his tongues of fire, Agni flares up in the forests. Roused by the wind, he moves about among the tall trees, and eats them with his sharpened teeth; he never tires; coming again and again; turning about on all sides; resounding with his sickle; laughing with his light."

"Professor Tyndal asks quite rightly: 'Is it in the human mind to imagine motion, without at the same time imagining something moved? Certainly not. The very conception of motion includes that of a moving body. What then is the thing moved in the case of sunlight? The undulatory theory replies that it is a substance of determinate mechanical properties, a body which may or may not be a form of ordinary matter, but to which, whether it is or not, we give the name of Ether.' May not the ancient Aryas say with the same right (had he been wise enough to put the question), 'Is it in the human mind to imagine motion without at the same time imagining some one that moves?' Certainly not. The very conception of motion includes that of a mover, and, in the end, of a prime mover."[1] And if, in the presence

[1] *Physical Religion*, p. 127.

of fire, the early Aryas had asked who then is the mover, he would have been told (if any had been there wise enough to answer the question) that it is a subject of determinate properties, a person who may or may not be like ordinary persons, but to whom, whether he be or not, the name Agni has been given.

Thus the rishis spoke of Agni as of an agent, as well as of Indra, Vayu, Rudra, and the Maruts; but we must always remember that they knew nothing definite of these agents any more than we do when we speak of physical phenomena as elements, or forces of nature, or certain movements.

This striking deva, Agni, manifested at first in the lightning and in the spark, became as time went on, the most popular, and most desired of all the powers; the fire on the hearth rendered winter bearable, cooked herbs and roots, and transformed the devourer of raw flesh into the eater of roast meat; caused the smoke of sacrifices offered to the higher Powers to ascend up to heaven. What precautions were necessary to prevent the capricious and uncertain fire from becoming extinct at an inopportune moment, or in its rage from destroying men and things. Fire was for the rishis a being more and more inexplicable. Becoming increasingly impressed by his beneficence, they seek to call him by some new name which shall express more perfectly this later impression; the name deva—bright, shining—no longer satisfies them; they use words such as invincible, almighty; even these do not suffice them; at last they find the word Amartya —immortal.

"Immortal amongst Mortals."

This expression may be understood in more ways than one; it is enough for me that the Hindoos made use of it. It is possible to recognise in it the first attempt to bridge over the gulf which human language and human thought had themselves created between the visible and

the invisible, between the mortal and the immortal, between the finite and the infinite. For the right appreciation of our intellectual organisation, it is important to discover and distinguish the coarse threads that form the woof of our most abstract thoughts.

It must be noticed that the use of the word *immortal* in this passage does not imply that Agni is considered otherwise than as natural fire. The Rig-Veda does not seem to acknowledge the presence of supernatural beings; all the names given to the striking aspects of nature, even those used to designate the unknown powers in general, such as Asura—a living thing; Deva-asura—the living gods; Amartya—the immortal, still retain physical elements in the most ancient hymns.

Beings without definite attributes did not occur to the imagination of those who supplied these names, and believed in the existence of those which these names represented.

That which has often been called the adoration of fire was at first its application to the necessities of domestic life, and afterwards its use in all mechanical and artistic pursuits. If we transfer ourselves to that early stage of life, and picture the difficulties there were in primitive times of procuring fire at a moment's notice, and the dangers which would menace a whole community deprived of fire in the midst of winter, and plunged suddenly in darkness, we require no far-fetched explanation for a number of time-hallowed customs throughout the world connected with the lighting, and still more with the guarding of the fire. The natural desire for possessing so useful an object, and the no less natural terror of being deprived of it, would lead men to adopt the practices for maintaining it, afterwards called superstitions, but which during the infancy of humanity, were perfectly natural, and which developed into a sacred rite; at a later period vestal virgins were appointed to guard it in the temples; and the fires of St John, which are still lighted annually

on the tops of certain mountains, are the last remains of these ancient customs.

The Vedic hymns give us the many different channels whence the phenomenon of fire proceeds, at one time coming in one way and then in another, to attract man's attention and to awaken his drowsy faculties. Fire comes from the skies where it shines as the sun, from the waters, since it comes as lightning, from the moist and rain-laden clouds, from the stones, and from wood, in the shape of sparks, from dried leaves and herbs placed on the altar to receive and nourish the sacrificial flame. Ceaselessly fire applied at the door of each habitation. Apparently it said to man, whose slowness of comprehension it seemed to understand, "To you men, I come, that I may awake you from sleep, and cause you to know what I am."

At last man understood, and the rishis reply to the fire.

"Thou, O Agni, art born from the skies—thou from the waters—thou from the stone—thou from the wood—thou from the herbs—thou, king of men, the bright one."[1]

At the same time the mind of the poet seems illuminated with a new thought.

"If we have committed any sin against thee through human weakness, through thoughtlessness, make us sinless before Aditi, O Agni, loosen our misdeeds from us on every side."[2]

Of Agni, the fire, there would seem to be nothing left in that supreme god whose laws must be obeyed, and who can forgive those who have broken his laws. Between this transformed Being of whom the Aryans implore mercy, and Him whom we call God, we can perceive no difference, and yet, so mysterious are human speech and thought, the Hindoos, who thought in ancient Sanscrit, declare that Agni has not yet thrown off his physical characteristics, that he is not yet, and cannot be God; they add that

[1] *Rig-Veda*, II. 1. 1. [2] *Ibid.*, IV. 12. 4.

it is impossible to give the true Vedic impression in its fulness, since no modern language possesses phrases in which to express it.

I read in another hymn addressed to Agni a curious verse.

"O Heaven and Earth, I proclaim this truthful fact, that the child, as soon as born, eats his parents. I, a mortal, do not understand this fact of a god; Agni indeed understands, for he is wise."[1]

Are the rishis who utter this exclamation ignorant of the fact that the parents of fire are two dry sticks? Or is it that the act of a god in eating its father and mother is abhorrent to them?

"If we, O gods—ignorant among the wise—transgress your commandments, whatever of the sacrifice weak mortals with their feeble intellect do not comprehend, Agni, the priest, who knows all rights, comprehends it, makes it all good."[2]

The whole question of sacrifices is still hotly discussed; whether they preceded or followed prayer. Did the Vedic poets wait till the ceremonial was fully developed before they invoked the Powers, or did their prayers suggest the performance of sacrificial acts?

"Agni, accept this branch that I offer. Accept this my service—listen well to these my songs. Whosoever sacrifices to Agni with a stick of wood, with a libation, with a bundle of herbs, or with an inclination of his head, he will be blessed."[3]

We nowhere hear of a mute sacrifice. That which we call a sacrifice the ancients called simply *karma*, an act; a simple prayer, preceded by a washing of the hands, or accompanied by an inclination of the head, may constitute a *karma*, an act; to light the fire on the hearth, to bow the head and utter the name of Agni with some kind

[1] *Rig-Veda*, X. 79. 4.
[2] *Ibid.*, X. 2. 4, 5.
[3] *Ibid.*, II. 6, 1; VIII. 19. 5.

epithet, might also be termed an act. At first the sacrifice may only have been a prayer accompanied by a gift. They may originally have been inseparable, but in all this there is nothing opposed to the idea that it would be in accordance with human nature that prayer should come first. In time the act of sacrifice assumed a sacred and solemn character. In the earlier vocabularies of the Aryan tongues the word sacrifice does not occur; the Sanscrit and Zend root of the word are almost identical, and these languages furnish many words indicative of minute detail of ancient ceremonial. From this may be inferred that a hymn full of allusions to the celebrations of sacrifices must date from a period posterior to the separation of the families.

"Agni, drive away from us the enemies—tribes who keep no fire came to attack us."[1]

When the Aryans of Asia abandoned their first habitation, and advanced southwards plundering as they went, they encountered some of the aborigines of the country, whose territory they coveted. They were wild tribes; the descriptions given by the rishis evidently refer to the aborigines of India, whose descendants survive to the present day, speaking non-Aryan dialects. The epithets of devil and demon are freely used concerning them in the hymns. But apparently in their encounters Agni, who opposes these hostile foes, by appearing under the form of flaming torches, is not successful in overcoming them, since the Aryans implore the aid of other allies. They invoke the help of the two chief warlike powers, Indra and Soma, to destroy those "who worship other gods, who do not speak the truth, and who eat raw meat."[2]

"O Indra and Soma, burn the devils, throw them down—they who grow in darkness—tear them off, the madmen, kill them, slay the gluttons. O Indra and Soma, up against the cursing demon—may he burn like an oblation in the fire. Pour your everlasting hatred

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 189. 3. [2] *Ibid.*, VII. 104.

upon the villain who hates the Brahman, who eats raw flesh, and who looks abominable." [1]

Of Soma, who lends such capable aid to Agni when repulsing the enemies of the Aryans, the Hindoos have four different conceptions. Soma is sometimes the moon, the abode of the fathers. Soma is also the lord of the moon. Soma is the bowl containing the drink of the gods, ambrosia. Soma is sometimes ambrosia itself. The etymology of the word indicates homonymy; originally it meant rain and the moon. Ambrosia was a type of the rain fertilising the earth, yet being at the same time a strengthening draught. It is sometimes quite impossible to decide of which Soma the rishis are speaking, especially as they seem to find pleasure in confounding the terms. This play upon words fills almost the whole of one book of the *Rig-Veda*.

"Meditate on the wisdom of Soma (moon) in all its greatness—yesterday it was dead, to-day it is living."

"The poet has swallowed Soma (the juice), he has felt an overpowering inspiration—he has found his hymn."

The exalted virtues of Soma have raised it to the rank of those divinities who dispense immortality.

"Where there is eternal light, in the world where the sun is placed, in that immortal, imperishable world place me, O Soma, where life is free, in the third heaven of heavens, there make me immortal." [2]

What is the third heaven? It is an expression with which we are familiar, but what does it mean? The Aryans also call the children of Rudra to their help; they are allied to Indra and are called Maruts. They fill the air with alarming sounds; these noise-producing beings are the representatives of storms and tempests, they never appear alone in the Veda, they traverse space in groups of from twenty-five to eighty in number, and they make the earth tremble.

[1] *Rig-Veda*, VII. 104. [2] *Ibid.*, IX. 113. 7.

"Where are you going? towards whom do you go when you descend from on high like a blast of fire? May power be with thee and thy race, O Rudra. Come to us, Maruts, come and help us as quickly as lightning before the rain! Let loose, O devourer, your anger like an arrow against the proud enemy of the poets." [1]

A deep problem now presents itself. What was there before anything existed? Two contradictory ideas appear in the hymns, and the conflict must have been trying.

"Sages have said: In the beginning the world was—a single world—there was not a second. Others have said: In the beginning this world had no existence, and out of nothing, what now is, came."

Much confusion of thought reigned in the human mind. The world must surely have been made from something, and by certain agents; but then, how were the agents themselves formed? and what material served them for the making of the world?

Other questions followed. "Who has seen the first-born? Where was the life, the blood, the soul of the world? Who went to ask this from any that knew it? What was the forest? what was the tree out of which they shaped heaven and earth? Ye wise, seek in your mind on what he stood when he held the world." [2]

Our ancestors would not have been human if they had not yielded to the temptation of representing the invisible makers of the world by some personality. They therefore speak of carpenters and workmen "who have cunning hands; clever artificers who forge the lightning." Is it those who have made all that is visible? They know not. It is certain that in speaking of carpenters, workmen, thunderers, tearers, rainers, men approached, perhaps unconsciously, the domain of causes, which from the beginning has been the ancient foundation of all that is trans-

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 39. [2] *Ibid.*; I. 164; X. 81. 4.

cendental in our knowledge. It could not be otherwise, since our reason is so constituted that it admits nothing but what is either cause or effect.

There are thoughts to be found in the Veda which are excessively infantine, but again there are others of astonishing subtlety; perhaps they date from different epochs; but individualities are apparent in these hymns, and they anticipated by many centuries the greater number of contemporary writers who followed at a slower pace. The rishis who said, "There is one Being only, although the poets call him by a thousand names," perfectly expressed this truth; and the Hindoos for centuries have invoked Indra, Mitra, Agni, and Savitar, though the more profound thinkers have protested against the traditional use of these names, just as Heracleitus 500 years before our era objected to the thousand names, the thousand temples, and the thousand legends of the Greek mythology.

The rishis in asking themselves how all things began were not content with representing the world as coming from the hands of clever workmen, were they even invisible; it was no great labour to discover that; but at times they had profounder thoughts. The sacred literatures of many ancient peoples have reached us, in fragments more or less complete; but the meditations which can equal those in the hymn 129 are rare.

"The One in the form of the Un-born was not—the luminous firmament existed not—nor the great vault of heaven—where was he hidden? Was it in the bottomless abyss? Death existed not—nor immortality. There was no distinction between day and night. The One breathed breathless by itself. Other than it there nothing since has been. There was darkness then; everything in the beginning was hidden in gloom—all was like the ocean, without a light. Then that germ which was covered by the husk—the One—was brought forth by the power of heat. On this germ was love—the springtime

of the spirit—yes. And the poets whilst meditating upon it, discovered in their soul the link between created things and things not created. This spark, comes it from the earth—piercing all—penetrating through all—or comes it from the sky? There seeds were scattered, and powerful forces came into being; nature beneath, will and power above. Who knows the secret—who proclaimed whence this manifold creation sprang? The gods themselves came later into being; who knows whence this great creation sprang? He from whom all this great creation came—whether his will created or was mute. He, the most high seer, that is in highest heaven, he knows it—or perchance even he knows not."

"Who knows whence this great creation sprang?" the Hindoos asked themselves, thousands of years before our era; and again, "What was the forest, what was the tree, from which they cut out heaven and earth? What was there before anything existed?" These questions, differently expressed, are found in many places in the Veda; every kind of problem is presented to us under the form of enigmas. The Hindoos seem to have had an idea that the visible world was preceded by something invisible, yet much more real than the world of phenomena in which we live; and that before apparitions existed, there was that which appeared afterwards in time and space.

These same questions will constantly be repeated in changing terms, through the coming centuries, whilst a heaven and earth remain.

The problem which occupied the powerful intellects of Hume and Kant, and which these philosophers named the principle of causality, was already exercising the brains of our fathers when they gave names for the first time to the sky, the sun, the dawn, and the other physical phenomena, by means of roots indicating activity; for the principle of causality manifested itself in the beginning, not in the direct search for a cause, but in the assertion of the exist-

ence of an agent. This mental labour, commenced and accomplished thousands of centuries ago by millions of human beings, deserves at least as much attention from us as the learned speculations of two modern philosophers, be they Hume or Kant.

So striking an object as the sun, even before possessing a definite name, must have been designated in some special way; perhaps as a simple circle, such as we find in the Egyptian hieroglyphics, in the Chinese writing, and in our astronomical almanacs; this symbol would give little opportunities to the mythologists; but when the idea arose that the sun was a ball, and that an analogy was found between a ball and an eye, man began to speak of the sun as the eye of the sky. We say readily in all languages, "God is omniscient," but Hesiod, to express the same truth said, "The sun is the eye of Zeus who sees and knows all." If the language appears childish to us, we must remember that it was the expression of a poet who lived long before the philosophers of Greece, we shall then be less struck by its harshness than by the happy and pure thought which has been expressed.

The sun has been an object of adoration with many of the primitive nations; it seems uncertain whether as the divinity himself or as his representative; most of the mythologists assure us that the ancient Egyptians worshipped the sun's disc itself. The first step is invariably followed by a second, and a good example of development in religious belief is afforded by a Mexican legend. The story is told of the Inca Tupac Yupanqui, who, though reputed a son of the sun, began to doubt the divine omnipotence of his divine ancestor. At a great religious council, held at the consecration of the newly built temple of the sun at Cazco, he rose before the assembled multitude to deny the divinity of the sun. "Many say," he began, "that the sun is the maker of all things. But he who makes should abide by what he has made. Now

many things happen when the sun is absent; therefore he cannot be the universal Creator. And that he is alive at all, is doubtful, for his journeys do not tire him. He is like a tethered beast who makes a daily round; he is like an arrow which must go whither it is sent, not whither it wishes. I tell you that he, our father and maker—the sun—must have a lord and master more powerful than himself, who constrains him to his daily circuit without pause or rest." [1]

We can follow in the Vedic hymns the gradual development which changes the sun from a simple luminary, and the giver of daily light and life, to the preserver and ruler of the world. He who brings life and light to-day, is the same who brought life and light on the first of days; as he drives away the darkness of night, and as "the stars flee before the all-seeing sun, like thieves," the eye fixed on men—the sun—sees the right and wrong and knows their thoughts.

Almost all peoples have raised their eyes to the sky, the abode of the invisible Powers; and our ancestors, who addressed such fervent prayers to all the phenomena of nature could not fail to invoke it. But the sky shows itself under very varying aspects, it is sometimes the sky dazzling with light, then there is the lowering sky, or the sky that thunders, that rains; each time that it varies it changes its name; and these names must be known to man since it is always invoked under the special denomination of the power he is about to address. Varuna is one of the names of the sky, his physical characteristic reflects it, it is the vast vault or covering which protects the whole earth and its inhabitants; it is also the sky which is itself obscured when the sun disappears. In the Veda, Varuna is associated with Mitra, the light, thus giving rise to a concept of correlative gods representing night and day, morning and evening, heaven and earth.

[1] *Physical Religion*, pp. 183-4.

"He who should flee far beyond the sky—even he would not be rid of Varuna, the king. King Varuna sees all this, what is between heaven and earth, and what is beyond. This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas are Varuna's loins; he is also contained in this small drop of water."

"The great lord of these worlds sees as if he were near: if a man stands or walks, if he goes to lie down or to get up, if he thinks he is walking by stealth, the god Varuna knows it all. What two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third."[1]

The prayers of the rishis overflow with the acknowledgment of their sins, and their belief that the gods have the power to deliver them from the burden of their faults.

"Let me not yet, O Varuna, enter into the house of clay (earth). Have mercy, Almighty, have mercy. If I move along trembling, like a cloud driven by the wind, have mercy. Through want of strength, have I gone astray, thou strong and bright god, have mercy. Thirst came upon the worshipper, though he stood in the midst of the waters—have mercy, Almighty, have mercy."[2]

It is noticeable that in the Hindoo mind the sun, in its many manifestations, is sometimes synonymous with the firmament: Indra, as the illuminator of the zenith; Savitar, as the bestower of life; Mitra, as the friend of humanity; the indefatigable Agni, so modest but so active, in cooking the food and smelting iron, so powerful when it bears the smoke of the sacrifices heavenwards, and so exalted when it takes its place in the sun and descends in the form of lightning; and the spacious firmament which holds them all in its bosom; they are all one to the adorer of the divine powers; all are equally marvellous, it is a galaxy of brilliance. What innumerable gods, and not one to whom it could be said, "Deliver us from evil."

[1] *Atharva*, IV. 16. [2] *Rig-Veda*, VII. 89.

Urged on by an irresistible curiosity the rishis ceaselessly probe into the unknown and the distant.

"Beyond the sky, beyond the earth, beyond the Devas and the Asuras, what was the first germ which the waters bore, wherein all gods were seen? The waters bore that first germ in which all the gods came together. That *one* thing in which all creatures rested was placed in the lap of the unborn. You will never know him who created these things, something else stands between you and Him. Enveloped in mist and with faltering voices, the poets walk along rejoicing in life."[1]

How was it that in the midst of the magnificence of their immense Pantheon, the poets succeeded in obtaining glimpses of the *One*. Who was He? The mists surround Him and prevent Him being clearly discerned.

If there was one thing in nature more adapted than another to satisfy the desire of bridging over the limits of the visible world, it was certainly the vault of heaven; above the storms and clouds which are temporary, beyond all that is changeable; amongst all the changing objects which meet the eyes, surely the firmament was the most exalted, the most extended, and immovable. We know the genealogy of the name of the sky, Dyaus, which enables us to trace the transformations and subsequent applications; and as we advance we shall glean some particulars of that science which at a later date was called grammar.

It is known that in the Aryan languages some of the oldest words are without gender; speaking grammatically, pater is not a masculine, nor mater a feminine; nor do the oldest words for river, mountain, tree, or sky, disclose any outward sign of grammatical gender. But though without any signs of gender, all ancient nouns expressed activity. The distinction of gender began, not with the introduction of masculine nouns, but with the setting

[1] *Rig-Veda*, X. 82.

apart of certain derivative suffixes for feminine words; thus when *bona* was introduced, *bonus* became masculine; when *puella* could be applied to a girl, *puer*, which formerly meant both boy and girl, became restricted to the meaning of boy. Therefore, whenever it happens that we have a female representative of a natural phenomenon by the side of a male, the female may almost always be taken as the later form. This rule, which has been strictly applied to the name of Dyaus, dates from so remote a time that its origin is lost in the mists of ages.

Dyaus, like *deva*, shining, comes from the root *div* or *dyu*, but this root bifurcates at once. In the Rig-Veda forms derived from the base *div* are masculine or feminine as the case may be, whilst those which are derived from *dyu* are always masculine; thus *dyaus* from *div*, is the firmament, the expanse above our heads, and is the later feminine form; whereas *dyaus* from *dyu*, is the sky considered as a power, an active force, and is masculine, and consequently is the earlier conception. These two words, *dyaus*, nominative singular, and its base, *dyu*, being almost synonymous may be used indifferently.

All vegetable cells are destined to become plants, though sometimes different plants, this, observation of nature teaches us. All verbal cells are destined to become words, though differing, that is, with different meanings; the small amount of philological study to which we have already devoted ourselves in these pages shows us this. All cells, whatever their nature, possess a transitive movement; the French word *éclater* has the meaning of to disperse in brilliancy; if we imagine scintillations of light escaping from a central luminary we obtain the idea of a transitive luminous movement. Whilst a cell preserves its primary condition it is not possible to predict its future; no human intelligence could have foretold that the root *div* and *dyu* would produce the Sanscrit word deva, which means to shine,

and deva would in time develop into deus, which now no longer means to shine, but God. It is a curious characteristic of Vedic Sanscrit that this uncertainty of meaning of such words as deva, which expresses equally the half physical and half spiritual intention, is an evidence of its rays having proceeded from the same source of light and heat.

Human reason, in finding its way amongst crooked paths, often wanders; the representations it makes of things are coloured by rays projected by mythological or dogmatic mirages. We may recognise in the manner in which our ancestors have viewed the supernatural powers the prototype of our own errors of judgment. From the time that Dyaus became the warming, life-giving sky and thus active, the rishis were authorised to call him pitar, father, and to place by his side Prithvi, the earth, who is the mother, and they then spoke of Dyaus as the father of the dawn, and of day and night. These were thus considered as the first attributes of the sky in Aryan mythology.

We are inclined to ascribe these excursions of thought to the flights of poetic fancy, but they are rather the results of the poverty of language, which make it impossible not only to express abstract ideas, but even to describe accurately the phenomena of the physical world. Religion and language in those days were so closely allied that it is possible to say of a religious idea in its infancy that it was a fragment of ancient language; for in order to describe his impressions the Aryan depended entirely on the words with which it furnished him. For this reason many of the hymns, incoherent though they may appear, are of inestimable value. Every one of their words weighs and tells, but for the translator who endeavours to present the Vedic thought in modern idioms, the results are so discouraging that he is tempted to give up in despair.

When at a later date the name of Dyaus became the centre of fabulous tales, it still remained in the Sanscrit language of that time one of the many traditional and unmeaning words for sky; but we must understand clearly that in the most ancient hymns of the *Rig-Veda* this name is the incarnation of the Power which is beyond and above conception, whose existence had been obscurely indicated from the beginning, and who remained unnamed long after the beasts of the forests and the birds of the air had received their appellations.

From the time of their exodus the Aryan family, going in different directions, were naturally divided into branches; vast distances separated them, and they forgot that the same cradle, the same hearth, had sheltered them at birth. But the ties which connected them originally were not snapped at all points, since they brought away with them words belonging to their mother-tongue, and certain intuitions were the common property of all. Before the Greek, Latin, Sanscrit, and German languages became separated, the name of a sovereign Power was implied in those of the divinity which at a much later time occupied so large a space in the history of Greece, Rome, India, and of Germany.

Coupled with the word *pitar* the name Dyaus appears in the most ancient Aryan prayers as Dyaush-pitar, Zeus-pater, and Ju-piter. These composite names are no invention of the poets; they are the results of certain laws of language to which our minds—if they would not turn from the right path—must submit. The initial *dy* in Dyaus is represented in Latin by *j*; Ju in Jupiter corresponds exactly with Dyaus. The name of the Teutonic god Tyr, genitive Tys, also corresponds, and as exactly, with Dyaus; in Gothic it would be Tius, and in Anglo-Saxon Tiw, preserved in Tiwsdæg, the day of the god Tyr, and Zio in Old High-German, where we find Ziestac for the modern Dienstag, the day of the god Mars. Tius,

Tiw, Tyr, and Zio are forms that exist side by side, all of which of course proceed from that wonderful root *div*, and represent the bright sky, day, and god. No etymological interpretation would be satisfying which did not embrace all these forms, since they are all dialectic variations of Dyaus, the same name in different languages. All names truly related have but one root, in the same way as living beings who are brothers have but one mother.

If another proof were needed of the uninterrupted continuity of speech and thought amongst the chief of the Aryan people, the following fact will afford it :—

At the time when the schools flourished in Athens, and when the Greeks were hardly conscious of the existence of India, it would have been possible, I suppose, to see young pupils seated before tables on which the master had written the declensions which composed the task for the day. There might be read :—

Nom. Zeús
Gen. Dios
Dat. Dii
Acc. Dia
Voc. Zeû

Thus the young Athenians wrote the name of Zeus with an acute accent in the nominative, and a circumflex in the vocative.

At the same time the pupils of the Brahmans at Benares, when declining the name of their supreme deity, accented the syllables exactly in the same way as the Greeks, and they wrote :—

Nom. Dyaús
Gen. Dyvas
Dat. Divi
Acc. Divam
Voc. Dyaûs

But there was this difference between the Grecian pupils

and the Hindoos, that the former were ignorant of the reason of these changes of accent, since the explanation was lacking in the Greek grammar, whereas the Sanscrit grammar explained to the latter the general principles of accentuation on which the changes rested.

The name of Dyaus was the source from which sprang an unique name, coined once and for ever, adopted by our entire family; the Greeks have no more borrowed it from the Hindoos, than the Romans and the Teutons from the Greeks; for it was pronounced before the separation of our ancestors with regard to language or religion; its meaning was Heaven-Father.

Our missionaries who go from one end of the earth to the other, reciting the Lord's Prayer in all the dialects of the world, do not doubt the historical fact that this prayer was said one day at Jerusalem for the first time; we also may feel as profoundly convinced that under the name of Heaven-Father, the Supreme Being has been worshipped on the Himalayan mountains, under the oaks of Dodona, on the Capitol, and in the forests of Germany. It has required millions of men to fashion this name alone, which is the most ancient prayer of the Aryan race.

"Five thousand years have passed, perhaps more, since the Asiatic Aryans, speaking as yet neither Sanscrit, Greek, nor Latin, called upon the All-Father as Dyu-patar, Heaven-Father. Four thousand years ago, or it may be earlier, the Aryans who had travelled southwards to the rivers of the Punjaub called him Dyaush-pita, the Heaven-Father. Three thousand years ago, or it may be earlier, the Aryans on the shores of the Hellespont called him Zeus-pater, Heaven-Father. Two thousand years ago the Aryans of Italy looked up to that bright Heaven above and called it Ju-piter, the Heaven-Father. And a thousand years ago the same Heaven-Father was invoked in the dark forests of Germany, since the Teutonic Aryans sacrificed to the same Heaven-Father; and his

old name of Tyr, Tiu, or Zio resounded then perhaps for the last time.

But no thought, no name, has ever been entirely lost." [1]

Some thousands of years have elapsed since these families have spread abroad on all sides; each branch has formed its own language, its own nationality, its mode of viewing life, and its philosophies; temples have been built and razed to the ground; since then all have aged, all are wiser, perhaps better, but the name which they gave to the Invisible Power who enfolds them is still the same, "Our Father which art in Heaven."

This name, whose unity has always been perfect, is a magical formula, which brings our ancestors, even the most remote, within touch, and enables us to see them as they were, as they spoke and felt, thousands of years before Homer and the Hindoo poets. Guided by the science of language and following the path in the Vedic hymns taken by the humanity preceding us, we see how the concept of God, in its germ in the name Deva, grew from the idea of light, to active light, the one who wakens, the giver of daily light, of warmth and new life.

It is easy to understand the difference between these two assertions—first of this one—that the early Aryans called the phenomena of nature themselves by the name of God; and the other—that the Aryan mind distilled from the concept of these phenomena the general idea of God.

"If I were asked," said Max Müller, "which is the most wonderful discovery of the nineteenth century in the history of humanity, I should reply it is that of the etymological equation of the Sanscrit Dyaush-pitar, the Greek Zeus-pater, the Latin Ju-piter, and Tyr, Tiw, and Zio of the Germans."

That the generality of people should be inconsequent is not a matter of surprise. He may well be pardoned

[1] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 223.

who does not at once, on the word of another, credit a number of facts of which no proofs are forthcoming, and who at the same time shows himself unwilling to accept the deductions of a science of which he knows nothing, that of etymology; but what does seem strange is that learned scholars who are perfectly capable of following the progress made by philology, refuse to recognise the identity of the different names given to the supreme deity of the Aryan race. Certain positivists are in this case; nothing irritates them more than to offer them grammatical proof that all the Aryan families had, before their separation, the same belief; and they try to demonstrate that the name of Dyaus at the first meant nothing more than the sky; and that only at a later period people had changed the name of sky and of firmament—physical phenomena only—into proper names which transformed *nomina* into *numina*.

It is worthy of note that this assertion is founded on a fact, but a fact not well understood. In the later literature of India which was known before the Veda became so much studied, the name of Dyaus was only known as a feminine; it was the recognised name for sky and day, and implied nothing divine. The ancient Aryan Dyaus after a time paled before Indra—a god of Indian soil; Indra, formerly the rain-giver—the ally of Rudra—ceased to reside exclusively in the more menacing phenomena of the atmosphere, and it is the pure light in which he is worshipped. He is now supreme.

"Before Indra the divine Dyu bowed, before Indra bowed the great Prithivi."[1]

In order duly to celebrate Indra, the rishis did not content themselves with the praises they considered fitting for the other gods. They laboured hard to find the right expression and every hymn is a heroic feat.

"The other gods were sent away like shrivelled up old men; thou, O Indra, becamest the king. No one is

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 131. 1.

beyond thee, no one is better than thou art, no one is like unto thee. Keep silence well! we offer our praises to the great Indra in the house of the sacrificer. Does he find treasure for those who are like sleepers? Mean praise is not valued among the munificent." [1]

It is strange that it is in connection with the great Indra, the most popular of all the gods of India, that indications of a struggle between faith and doubt are apparent in the praises addressed to him. The existence of the other divinities was as firmly established as the splendour of the sun and stars, as the appearances of fire, the movements of the winds, the impressions made by heat and cold; and the confidence they inspired was too firmly established to require stimulating; and then suddenly we find the rishis discoursing on and enumerating the reasons that exist for man's belief in Indra.

"When the fiery Indra hurls down the thunder-bolt, then people put faith in him. Look at this his great and mighty work, and believe in his great power."

Whence came this insistence to recall the great power of Indra? It almost suggests the thought that the rishis felt the approach of a change in their conception of the omnipotence of some of the gods of nature.

"Offer praise to Indra, if you desire booty; true praise, if he truly exists. One and the other says, There is no Indra, who has seen him? Whom shall we praise? The terrible one of whom they ask where he is." [2]

But the poet at once introduces Indra on the scene, and makes him say:—

> "Here I am, O worshipper! behold me here.
> In might I overcome all creatures."—Id.

In reading the Rig-Veda attentively, in spite of these efforts to revive the ancient faith, here and there can be discovered slight traces of scepticism, so slight as to be

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 153; IV. 19. 2. [2] *Ibid.*, VIII. 100. 3

scarcely perceptible, and these apart from the incredulity exhibited concerning the powerful Indra. The Hindoo was by nature profoundly believing, but his intellect was subtle and scrutinising, and he considered it due to himself to give exact explanations of all; the rishis make the following true remarks.

"Fire is quenched by water, a cloud hides the sun, the sun also disappears behind the sea;" and from these observations they draw the following conclusions.

"Water must not be worshipped, since a cloud can carry it away; nor the cloud, since the wind can disperse it."

The positivists have made too much of the fact that Dyaus, at one time in India, meant simply the sky and day; a rock is not more immovable than grammar, and it is moreover quite indifferent to all blows aimed at truths other than it holds.

Certain scholars in their researches after the origin of Aryan divinities, were surprised and somewhat disconcerted at a gap which confronted them and prevented further progress; nowhere in the later literature of India could any trace be found of Dyaus as a god who could correspond to the supreme divinity of the other branches of the family. However, the very rational conviction that this deity must have existed gradually strengthened in the minds of the learned. They were thus at a standstill, when the Veda appeared under the strong light of modern investigation and brought to view the name of Dyaus totally different from the feminine dyaus, a Dyaus presenting in itself, not merely the masculine substantive, but joined with pita—father. Amongst the Hindoos it had paled before Indra, who was a god of later date, but the other Aryan races had been uninfluenced by this. Dyaus, the chief god, had accompanied them in their migrations, and Zeus-pater, Ju-piter, Tyr, Tiw, and Zio,

became the exact representative of him, each in a different country; this discovery of Dyaush-pita, was like finding at last a star in the very place of the heavens which had been fixed before by calculation, but where previously there had been a void.

This was not the only discovery due to the study of the Veda. No one could ignore the fact, that amongst the Hindoos dyaus was the name of the sky, since it bears in itself the root which attests this; but it would have been impossible to discover the radical or predicative meaning of Zeus by the help of Greek alone; it possesses no certificate of birth, and the Greeks had no traditions connected with it that could have taught us. With the help of comparative philology all is made plain; Zeus was born when Dyaus was recognised as masculine and called father, Dyaush-pitar, Ju-piter, Zeus-pater, and from the moment that we are made acquainted with the origin of Zeus, the rest of his career unrolls before us.

Our ancestors, however, had still a long time to wander in the wilderness of error, and lost themselves many times.

The Hindoos thought for a time that they had found in Dyaus the object of their search; but the supernatural light and the light of day became confounded; when the word Dyaus was pronounced, the many natural bright objects it might signify all vibrated in response and melted into one; they became—as a double star does—one object, and Dyu, the god of light, was eclipsed behind dyu the sky.

When the question was asked for the first time whence came the rain, the lightning, and the thunder, those who inhabited Italy replied that rain came from Jupiter Pluvius, the lightning from Jupiter fulminator and fulgurator, the thunder from Jupiter tonans. In Greece all that concerned the higher regions of the atmosphere was attributed to Zeus; it was Zeus who rained, who

snowed, thundered, gathered the clouds, let loose the tempests, held the rainbow in his hand; many legends were grouped around these divine names; the more incomprehensible they were, the more eagerly were they heard, until it is very doubtful whether any trace remains of that Being who at the first gave to the name of the sky its highest signification.

A characteristic trait of the Hindoos, which is noticeable in the hymns, is a tendency to praise all by which they are surrounded. Not satisfied with celebrating the virtues of the invisible beings, which they imagine to be behind the semi-tangible and intangible objects such as mountains, rivers, trees, fire, the sun, storms, etc., the rishis, carried away by the ardour of their feelings, glorify objects which are perfectly tangible, even those which they may have made with their own hands, or those which at least have nothing mysterious in them; these are termed *devatas*, and the commentator explains that by this word is meant the person or thing addressed; thus the victims to be offered, or a sacrificial vessel, or a battle-axe or shield, all these are called devatas; in some dialogues found in the hymns whoever speaks is called the rishi, whoever is spoken to is the devata.

"The late Herbert Spencer relates that even in our days the Hindoo offers prayers to the objects which he uses; a woman adores the basket which she takes to the market and offers sacrifices to it, as well as to the other implements which assist her in her household labours. A carpenter pays the like homage to his hatchet, the mason to his trowel, and the Brahman to the style with which he is going to write. The question is, in what sense did the author of *Principles of Sociology* use the word adore?"[1]

The desire to have an exact account of what is happening alternates with the prayers and adoration; the

[1] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 205 note.

questions and praises interlace like the threads of a web.

"Unsupported, not fastened, how does he (the sun) rising up, not fall down?"

The poet is also anxious to know how the dawn and the sun appear each morning; how there is so much rain, also such an abundance of rivers and streams.

"How many fires are there, how many dawns, how many suns, and how many waters? I do not say this, O fathers, to worry you; I ask you, O seers, that I may know."

The explanation also is desired by these enquirers how it is that a red or brown cow can give white milk.[1] The rishis are rigorous logicians, and consider that the powerful divinities who made the world such as it is might have done better; and they do not scruple to communicate their opinion to whom it concerns. "If we were as rich as you we should not allow our worshippers to beg their bread."

It has been asked whether humanity commenced by having a monotheistic or a polytheistic religion. This is not the first time that this question has been propounded; it has as an antecedent a very ancient opinion, developed in the schools of theology in the Middle Ages; the Fathers of the Church gave it as their opinion that a faith in one God, from the days of the greatest antiquity, had been the glorious heritage of the Semitic family, coming in a direct line from the first man. But these same theologians considered Hebrew to be the primitive language of the

[1] Max Müller says: "There is also a common saying or riddle in German which you may hear repeated to the present day:—

'O sagt mir doch wie geht es zu
Dass weis die milch der rothen Kuh?'"

—*Physical Religion*, p. 101.

human race, an assertion now known to be erroneous.[1] We may therefore subject the first assertion to an examination.

The learned writers who dispute on the original form of religious thought forget that the ancient Aryans could not have been either monotheistic or polytheistic. The Vedic hymns show us that though there were many gods, and that they were equal, yet whilst the worshipper was addressing one, the rest were excluded from his mind, and were as though they did not exist; each god became in turn the Supreme Power, and received the highest praise; the rishis, who had represented the sun under the names of Vishnu, Varuna, Mitra, Savitar as the creator of the world, spoke of it immediately afterwards as the child of the waters, born of the dawn, a god among other gods, neither better nor worse; it is this characteristic of the Aryan religion, this worship offered alternately to different divinities to which Max Müller has given the name of Henotheism.

"Among you, O gods, there is none that is great, and none that is little—none old or young—you are all great indeed."

The religion of humanity in its entirety at the beginning was this intuition of the divine, whose formula is that article of faith, at once the simplest and the most important—God is God—the want of definiteness in it making it the more applicable to the dawn of thought.

[1] Dante at one time was of this opinion. "In his *Il Volgare Eloquio*, lib. 1, cvi. p. 155, he says: 'It was the Hebrew idiom which was uttered by the lips of the first man who ever spoke in this world!' This idea was afterwards relinquished by him, as in the *Paradiso* he puts these words into the mouth of Adam:—

'The language I did use
Was worn away or ever Nimrod's race
Their unaccomplishable work began.'

The oldest form of human speech still remains lost in the darkness of antiquity."—Quoted from *Dante in Ravenna* by Miss Phillimore.

This primitive intuition of God was in itself neither monotheistic nor polytheistic, though it might become either according to the expression which it took in the language of man; in no language does the plural exist before the singular; no human mind could have conceived the idea of gods without having previously conceived the idea of one God. "It would be, however, quite as great a mistake to imagine, because the idea of a god must exist previously to that of gods, that therefore a belief in one God preceded everywhere the belief in many gods. A belief in God, as exclusively One, involves a distinct negation of more than one God, and that negation is possible only after the conception, whether real or imaginary, of many gods."[1] If therefore an expression had been given to this primitive intuition of the Deity, which is the mainspring of all later religion, it would have been, "There is a God," but certainly not yet, "There is but one God."

These fine distinctions require close attention to grasp them; the fact that in our modern tongues we have derived the singular *Theos* from the Greek plural *Theoi* has caused confusion; from a historical point of view, no doubt Theos has come from Theoi; but putting this aside, the meaning of the word has gone through as complete a transformation as that of the acorn to the oak; the evidence of this change has been so deeply impressed even on our outward senses that as soon as our intellect has attained some measure of development the sound of the word God used in the plural jars on our ears as if we heard of two universes or one twin.

The Hindoo mind, however, oscillated between the representation of many gods and of one only God; and the rishis appear to have attempted to establish a sort of priority amongst their numerous deities.

"That which is one, the seers call in many ways; they

[1] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i. p. 354.

speak of Indra, Mitra, Agni, and Varuna—they call it by various names—that which is, and is one."

"In the evening Agni becomes Varuna—he becomes Mitra when rising in the mornings; having become Savitri, he passes through the sky—having become Indra he warms the heaven in the centre."[1]

This attempt, which might have led to monotheism, came to nothing; on this point the Hindoos were behind the Greeks and Romans, who with their polytheism had a presiding deity, viz., Zeus and Jupiter.

"When we thus see the god Dyaus antiquated by Indra, and Indra himself almost denied, we might expect in India the same catastrophe which in Iceland the poets of the Edda always predicted—the twilight of the gods preceding the destruction of the world. We seem to have reached the stage when henotheism, after trying in vain to grow into an organised polytheism on the one side, or into an exclusive monotheism on the other, would by necessity end in atheism; yet atheism is not the last word of the Indian religion."[2]

What is atheism?

[1] *Atharva*, XIII. 3. 13.
[2] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 310.

CHAPTER XI

MAN'S CONCEPTIONS OF RELIGION

"No one sufficiently recognises the power of reason."
—St Thomas Aquinas.
"De nos jours, nous mouquons encore plus de raison que de religion."
—Fenelon.

This question: "What is atheism?" has aroused me with a start. Led aside as I had been by many beautiful, true, and striking thoughts, which I noted as they presented themselves to me; being also very preoccupied by depressing observations that I had made on my chronic inability to turn them to account, I lost sight of the fact that it is not sufficient to write and think at will merely, without definite plan, not keeping the goal in sight. This is my eleventh chapter, and I see with dismay that it is likely to exceed the two which precede it in length, and that it follows one concerned more with the repetition of words often spoken and seldom understood. I fear that I lack method.

During our own time we have seen a school arise, the Historical School; it was heralded in Germany by such men as Niebuhr, the two Humboldts, Bopp—the author of the first Comparative Grammar—Grimm, and many others. This School shows that an uninterrupted continuity connects what has been thought of old with what is being thought at present; that there is no break between the present and the past; and that the difficulties which are presented to us by the study of the present philosophical problems, would in a great measure disappear,

if we knew under what form these same problems presented themselves to man for the first time.

The Historical School advances step by step with the study of comparative philology; this latter has shown that at the beginning the number of words was very small; they lay, as it were, side by side, before man's eyes, as evenly and as regularly as the threads on a weaver's loom. But gradually, on account of our neglect, and our many misunderstandings, the idea contained in these words became entangled, and we have ceased to follow the course of the thread; the words have remained in our memory, but the meaning has changed; they may even have several meanings which contradict each other; the result is that we are ignorant of many things it would be well for us to know with certainty.

All problems whether of philosophy or of philology, are best solved by the historical method; let us bravely face each obscure question to which we have no key; each doubtful term the meaning of which is lost, and bid all retrace their steps in the path by which they arrived at us; avoiding the peril of the idle worker who has a theory, and a remedy ready for everything; and the walks in the country of dreams which have no chart to direct travellers.

For us who are not learned linguists there is more than one method of gaining information concerning words; the easiest is to note the use made of them at various times in the past; another way which is more important and more certain is to study their biographies, we should find them in ancient documents; a third method that exacts neither a knowledge of their history, nor their genealogy, consists simply in reflection; this process, which should be within the reach of all, is seldom used.

As I am constrained to follow the development of the Vedic religion at the commencement of what was neither polytheism nor monotheism; I recur to the last word of

the preceding chapter in order to find its historical antecedents.

History tells us that much in the same way as a wild beast pursues its prey, this epithet of atheist is hurled at men who in truth have little in common. "In the eyes of his Athenian judges Socrates was an atheist; yet he did not even deny the gods of Greece, but he reserved to himself the right to believe in something higher and more truly divine than Hephaistos and Aphrodite."[1] Spinoza was called an atheist by the Jews, his co-religionists, because his conception of Jahveh or Jehovah was wider than theirs. The early Christians were called *átheoi* by the Jews and Greeks because they believed not as the Jews and Christians believed. Were the Hindoos atheists when they said, "What is Indra? it is the sun, the rain only." Were they atheists when they ceased to believe in their Devas, the brilliant objects, the stars, the fields, the rivers, the eyes of man? If the history of the word atheist had only taught us one thing, *e.g.* that those who think differently from ourselves do not deserve the reproach of atheism, it would have extinguished the fires of many an *auto da fé*.

But are there real atheists? Do those persons exist who are convinced that the word God represents nothing? There may be; if you have succeeded in convincing human reason that there can be an act without a cause, a boundary without a beyond, a finite without an infinite; then you will have proved without doubt that there is no God. "God is a *great* word," said a German theologian, lately deceased, whose honesty and piety have never been questioned, "he who feels and understands that, will judge more mildly and more justly of those who confess that they dare not say that they believe in God."[2]

We ought never to call a man an atheist till we know

[1] *Origin and Growth of Religion*, p. 312.

[2] Rothe in his "Stille Stunden," *Anthropological Religion*, p. 16.

what kind of God it is that he has been brought up to believe in, and what kind of God it is that he rejects, it may be, from the best and highest motives. If we can respect the childlike faith of a charcoal-burner, let us also respect philosophical doubt; it may well indicate a turning-point in the life of a man, in which he is perhaps abandoning a belief of which he has seen the error, or is perhaps seeking to replace the less worthy faith, however dear it may be to him, by one more perfect, however its novelty may distress him; without such "atheism" as this our religion would long ago have only been a congealed hypocrisy.

In the life of an individual, as in the life of a nation, there comes a moment when opinion becomes modified; the old theory of the world being fashioned by a workman as a potter moulds his vessels of clay, has gradually disappeared. These ideas were so repugnant to the enlightened mind of Sakya-muni, the Hindoo Prince—universally known as Buddha—that he considered it irreverent to enquire how the world was made, and still more audacious to attempt to answer the enquiry.

That which took the place of henotheism amongst the Hindoos might aptly be termed adivism, a denial of the old Devas. Such a denial, however, of what was once believed, but could be honestly believed no longer, so far from being the end of religion, is in reality its vital principle.

Whilst about to deal with ideas which I know are true, it is gratifying to expose at the same time certain false opinions which have been put forth on the subject; it is curious to note how to start with a false opinion brings one to a wrong conclusion. Heroditus, Cæsar, and Quintus Curtius, who have all written on popular religious beliefs, relate that men adored the sun, the earth, the sky, fire, and water; that they worshipped certain rivers, and certain trees, and considered as gods all things that were

useful to them. This was the opinion of the ancient writers who knew no better, and modern theorists repeated also: "Primitive men deified the grand natural phenomena of nature, especially the stars, taking them for gods."

It is not a matter for surprise that primitive man should have formed the opinion that either in the world or out of it there should be a sovereign power which they considered as their gods.

In the eighteenth century the theory of fetishism was held to explain all the intuitions of primitive man; although not pertinent to the subject, this was not perceived until afterwards, and the theory was considered reasonable.

Whilst the *Theorists* take the predicate of God, when applied even to a fetish, as requiring no explanation, the *Historical School* sees in it the result of a long continued evolution of thought. It was evident that the human soul was so constituted that it must tend naturally and inevitably towards the Unknown; it was also necessary that man should learn that he possessed a soul.

We recognise that we have one; but are we equally clear as to what it is?

We answer perhaps: "Yes, it is that part of us which is not the body which perishes—the soul is immortal." It is well to be able to make such a reply, since it is true; our catechisms have sown the seed of which this is the result.

But since all human knowledge, whether abstract or practical, has the same beginning, through the senses, and that neither eye, ear, nor hand has to do with the soul, what can we know of it? Above all, what can we learn of its existence after death, the time when immortality has passed beyond the sphere of the experience of the senses? As man we recognise the spirit inhabiting the body, but with no form, such as it might receive after death; we can hardly clothe these ideas in words.

This belief in a soul, exactly like the belief in gods, and at last in One God, can only be understood as the outcome of constantly renewed observations and long meditations; the annals of language furnish material for this study, those ancient words, which, meaning originally something quite tangible and visible, came in time to mean that which is invisible and infinite.

The last breath of a dying person gave the first conception of the presence in man of a non-corporeal principle; it was recognised that this perceptible breath, at the moment of death, was an accident and transient. Language marks clearly the difference between the act of breathing or breath, and that which breathed, the invisible agent of this act—the living soul, the spirit. This agent received different names, in the different languages; the Greeks named it Psyche, saying that it was the breath which, at the hour of death, passed out through the bars of the teeth; amongst the Hindoos it was called *Atman*, and *Anima* amongst the Latins, two words which originally were understood by those using them as meaning something breathing. Cicero spoke of *Anima*, but he refrained from defining it, and frankly avowed that he did not know whether to call it breath or fire.

The word breath has been used figuratively to express the Power governing the world.[1] A poet in the Veda when speaking of the Supreme Being says, "It breathed without air."

Although the word breath was most frequently used to denote the principle of life, another expression was employed at a much earlier period; in countries the most remote from each other, the words, *the shadow of the dead*, were used, in order to express the idea of something intangible yet closely related to the body. The influence of language on thought is so real and so much more powerful than the testimony of our senses, that those who

[1] Psalm xxxiii. 6; Isaiah xi. 4.

named the soul a shadow, came at last to believe that corpses threw no shadow because it had left them.

It was then considered that the soul was not a homogeneous whole, but composed of parts of which some are ephemeral, destined to disappear with the body; these parts form what the Greek and Latin writers call the Ego, and the Hindoos *Aham*, what in French would be termed the *moi*—three words for one thing—an object of contingency, since it depends on circumstances—on the body, on age, and on sex.

All men have endeavoured to solve the riddle of human life; but the Hindoos, who especially excelled in researches dealing with the formation of words, that is to say, with the birth or development of ideas, whilst penetrating deeply into the mysteries of their soul, their Atman, arrived at an abstraction of this Atman, entirely freed from all earthly or physical particles, and this "vehicle of an abstraction" they considered to be incapable of perishing, since it had no connection with breath, it was the pure self, "freed from the fetters and conditions of the human Ego," hidden in the *Aham*; not contingent on circumstances—the self-existent One.

This new conception demanded a new name; the word Atman, which at first signified all the concomitant elements of the soul—those which pass, equally with those that remain—the Hindoos retained in their language, and it was used to define the essence itself, the being with no attributes, identical with the Being who vivified nature, the Infinite that supported man's own being, the Highest Self. Socrates knew this same Self, but he called it *Daimonion*, the indwelling God, whom the early Christians called the Holy Ghost.

From the Hindoo point of view this idea holds in itself the solution of the world's great enigma. The commandment indicating the kernel of all philosophy, "Know thyself," was the Hindoo doctrine. Know thyself as the self,

or if we translate it into religious language, "Know that we live and move and have our being in God" (Acts xvii. 28).[1]

In recognising the soul as that which is the *self*, we see that this fact of existing is more wonderful than the acts of breathing, feeling, thinking, living, since none of these manifestations are possible but on the sole condition of having proceeded from the Being—who *is*.

After having analysed the human soul, the Hindoos followed it from phase to phase from the moment when the breath which makes man a living being received its first names. They thus traced its history through time, and believed that they could follow it through eternity.

Years were employed in the elaboration of this history, and we only find its completion in a work which is posterior to the Vedic hymns, the Upanishads. The study of the human soul is the central point in Hindoo philosophy, and the Upanishads are the first psychological work which has ever been made.

There are persons who doubt the existence of things, of which others feel certain; but no one ever doubted the existence of his own soul. Why did the theologians who arranged the creeds not include the article, "I believe in my soul?" It would not have found men incredulous.

Reflection enables us to admit that the soul without God could possess no history, since neither the soul without God, nor God without the soul, could constitute religion. For this which is called religion, if under the form only of a soaring towards an unknown but longed-for Being, has always existed since there have been men on the earth.

We often meet the recurring questions "Whence?" "Why?" and the frequent "Because"; and now we are told by a small number of thinkers that all the explanations of speculative philosophy on the first impulses of the

[1] *Natural Religion*, p. 164.

human soul towards religion, are only worthless suppositions, unless philosophers—as historians have done—have recognised that there was a revelation at the beginning of time in the true sense of the word; but opinions differ as to "the true sense of the word."

We are so accustomed to apply the expression "the Word of God" to the sacred canon of Scripture, that we are inapt at seeking for God's Word elsewhere. But our first fathers read and studied it before the Bible existed.

To reflective minds, primitive man presents a moving spectacle, drawn towards the Unknown—the Unseen—they abandoned themselves unresistingly to the current leading them in certain directions.

I imagine that our Aryan ancestors would not have fixed their attention with such tenacity on the objects in nature which environed them, had the stars and heavenly bodies been immovable. But the sun appearing on the one side, traversing the sky and then disappearing on the opposite side, made the remark of the Incas prince very natural: "There is some power behind the sun causing it to ascend and descend." It did not occur to him that the sun travelled in accordance with natural laws. Other princes and poets, with their eyes fixed on the moving objects of the firmament, would have made the same reflection and sought the invisible cause.

If the world had been propelled by a moving power within itself, creatures possessing reason would have been vaguely conscious of it from the first. They would have been like the plants which turn regularly and infallibly in one direction, since they are not free to do otherwise.

"You premise a revelation," may be said to me, "and yet you direct us towards Evolution; choose one of the two since the one contradicts the other."

That remains to be proved. Apply the theory of the evolutionist to the mollusc; we see it directing itself, and extending its tentacles, towards a crumb of bread that

floats on the water. If they touch it the contact calls forth in the mollusc the act of seizing its prey. This is only a movement of semi-consciousness, or perhaps rather it is not entirely involuntary. Under the aspect of immediate cause and effect, we see a principle anterior to the phenomenon; certain perceptions which appear in the sight of many psychologists to be innate, that is to say, impressions received on our mind before we became conscious of ourself, may well be the result of the receptability of our Ego, which enables us, when it is affected in a certain fashion, to represent these affections to ourselves under certain forms.

The presentiment that unknown powers were to be found behind the visible world only showed itself when the Aryans first named them sky, sun, moon, storm, day, night, all terms previously used for various parts of nature.

With the perception of a Beyond, with the desire to know what it contained, a gap made itself felt which separated it from the known world. It must be crossed —a bridge was necessary. This thought spread from one end of the globe to the other, but our ancestors were the first bridge-makers. Scandinavian mythology mentions a bridge built by the gods which was of three colours; it was clearly intended originally for the rainbow. The Milky Way provided the Hindoos with a bridge; and in the Upanishads mention is made of a path having five colours. Here we have the rainbow again probably. The source of these legends is the ineradicable belief in the heart of man, that the here and hereafter, the immortal and the mortal, the divine and the human, cannot remain apart for ever.

Here I will comment on a striking feature of the *Rig-Veda*. The rishis give accounts of the manner in which the hymns are composed. They say that they worked at them as other workmen do, such as carpenters, weavers, and potters. Sometimes they speak of the verses as

coming direct from the heart; another says his hymn moves as a skiff on the river. Sometimes they speak of their hymns as god-given, and that the gods themselves are seers and poets. In no part of the *Rig-Veda* are there traces of the theories of the verbal inspiration with the meaning which the Greeks attached to the word as a theophany or manifestation of divinity, nor as it was understood afterwards in all religions, beginning with Brahmanism.

It would be useless to seek for a complete exposition of Vedic thought in the *Rig-Veda*; all the hymns found in it are not ancient; the collection was made by the priests, and if they retained much that was useless for our purpose in their worship, yet we should be very grateful to them, as in this manner much has been preserved to us of the ancient poetry of India, and it is they who recount the pilgrimage undertaken by the Aryans in search of the invisible lodestone which attracted them beyond what they could see and hear. As they advanced they rejoiced, seeming to attain their desire; but cast down under the weight of their sadness, as at times they found themselves misled.

It is said in the Bible, that for God a thousand years is as one day, and as I read the sacred books of India, not as a learned critic, but as a man who is rejoiced to discover his own thoughts in the writings of the Hindoo poets, the three or four thousand years appear to me as one day during which these poets have not ceased to pour themselves out in their hymns, and it would be possible to condense in one page the sentiments expressed in the first hymns and the last Upanishads.

"Simple minded, not comprehending in my mind, I ask for the hidden places of the gods."[1] "My ears vanish, my eyes vanish, and the light also which dwells in my heart; my mind with its far-off longings leaves me; what shall I say, and what shall I think?"[2]

[1] *Rig-Veda*, I. 164. 6.

[2] *Ibid.*, VI. 9. 6.

"There is no likeness of Him whose name is Great Glory. He is not apprehended of the eye, nor by the other senses, nor by speech; not by penance, or good works. We do not know, we do not understand, how anyone can teach it. It is different from the known, it is also above the unknown, thus we have heard from those of old who taught us this."

"You will not find Him who has created these things; something else stands between you and Him."[1]

These detached sentences acquire a very special value, when it is remembered that they are not quotations drawn from some modern works, which imitate the writings of another epoch; these exist nowhere but in the *Veda*, a literary work composed in the silence and shade, by writers who themselves were ignorant of the object of their desire.

One point at last becomes clear in the mist; a thousand years probably before the coming of Christ in Palestine, this verse was pronounced in the north of India, "He who is above the gods alone is God."[2]

The Grecian, Roman, and German divinities disappeared before other beliefs; but the Hindoos who knew that their gods were nothing more than mere names, had no dawning religion within their reach that they could adopt; therefore they did not abandon their traditions, and they continued to grope, as one of their own poets says, "Enveloped in mist and with faltering voices."

All the religious thought of the Vedic period can be found in the Upanishads (the literal meaning of this name is, sessions or assemblies of pupils round their master). There is not what could be called a philosophical system in these Upanishads; they are fragments, and are in the true sense of the word, guesses at truth; the spirit of the work is liberal, all shades of opinion are represented in it, the most divers, and sometimes contradictory. Con-

[1] *Rig-Veda*, X. 82. 7. [2] *Ibid.*, 121. 8.

jectures abound with regard to the creation, all start from the theory that the world we see is not the true world, and that before it appeared there was the true Self—the Self-existent—the One which underlies the whole world, from which has come all that seems to exist and does actually exist. This was the final solution of the search after the Unknown, the Invisible, which had been foretold through a long chain of centuries; an intuition more convincing than all the arguments which were used at a later period to prove the existence of the Causa Causæ.

The difficulties of the Brahmans in making a complete collection of these vague presentiments, confused thoughts, and true intuitions, were increased a hundredfold by the fact that they had to accept every word and every sentence of the Upanishads as supernaturally revealed. However contradictory at first sight, all that was said in the Upanishads had to be accepted and explained. It would seem difficult to construct a well-arranged literary monument out of such heterogeneous materials; but it was harmonised and welded into a system of philosophy that for solidity and unity will bear comparison with any other system of philosophy in the world.[1]

This gigantic work, which commenced with the Vedic hymns and ended in the book called the Vedanta, or End, and was the end or supreme object of the Veda, is also known under the name of Mîmâmsâ-sutras. Mîmâmsâ is a desiderative form of the root *man*, to think, and a very appropriate name for a philosophical work of this kind; and sûtra means literally a string; but it is here used as the name of short and abstract aphorisms, rendered still more enigmatical by the conciseness of the language. There are several hundreds of these sayings or headings, forming tables of contents, a magic chaplet of immeasurable length, each word containing condensed thought.

[1] *Theosophy or Psychological Religion*, p. 97.

This work must have required a concentration of mind which it is difficult for us to realise.

The meaning and form of these aphorisms are characteristic—here is one.

"I will declare in a line, that which has required millions of volumes.

Brahma is true, the world is false; the soul is Brahma and nothing else."

Those who consider the Supreme Being as the Infinite in nature, and the individual soul as the Infinite in man, must consider God and the soul as one, not two, seeing there cannot be two Infinites; such is the belief of the Hindoos; but this belief does not belong to them exclusively, it existed amongst the Greeks, and it is encountered in other places in our day besides India.

As works of art these sûtras are of course nothing, but for giving a complete and accurate outline of a whole system of philosophy they are admirable. Under these fragmentary forms can be found treatises of grammar, etymology, exegesis, phonetics, ceremonial, and jurisprudence.

The aphorism which I have quoted is the pure quintessence of the Vedanta.

And of Pantheism also, it may be said. This word Pantheism is one of the most difficult to define, and I shall not attempt to explain it. I have a horror of epithets, and I am sorry that it is not always possible to avoid them. I do not examine philosophical systems too minutely, lest I should be drawn into hurling at them such words as pantheism, mysticism, positivism, materialism, naturalism, without being quite clear when it is no longer lawful to express myself in these terms; epithets and labels are very apt to return home to roost. I will therefore confine myself to this remark, with regard to the belief of the Hindoos; if each definite colour can be broken up into a number of tints too numerous to name, may it not

be the same with certain shades and meanings in words and thoughts?

The Greeks hardly suspected the existence of the Veda; in more modern times Europe caught glimpses of it; and now, although completely discovered and studied, it is thoroughly known only to a few erudite scholars, which explains the fact that this ancient creation of the Hindoo mind has exercised so small an influence on our philosophy.

The Sacred Writings of the Hebrews

Whilst the hymns of the Rig-Veda, with their simple meditations, invocations and interrogations—sent out by chance, as it were, into space—accurately trace the march of thought which accompanies the search for indications of the Unknown—the Infinite; we look in vain in the Old Testament for the first dawnings, the first impressions made on the human soul by the existence of things divine. From the time when, in the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve entered into communion with the Eternal, the sacred narrative of facts, evidently historical, continues in such a manner as to have led some to regard it as merely allegorical.

To verify in the light of scientific knowledge the titles which the Bible can truly present to the veneration of the Christian world appears to some more and more advisable.[1] Few persons amongst the critical students of the Old Testament doubt that the books said to be by Moses are a collection of ancient documents, a compilation made by different individuals living at different periods, with long intervals between them, each with his own point of view. The conscientious examination to which these portions of the sacred writings have been subjected was directed at first to isolated points, and in order to exercise freely the critical faculties so much in evidence now, it was necessary

[1] Higher Critics.

to modify the generally accepted view that the religion of the Jews was cast in one piece, and perfect at the first. It was necessary to separate the ancient documents from those of a more recent date, but the attempt to make an exact chronological table of the earlier history of the Hebrews was abandoned. Until the death of Solomon only round numbers could be used, even the date of the oldest fact in history, the exodus of the Jewish people from Egypt, cannot definitely be fixed. Amongst the Egyptologists, whose testimony is of the greatest value, there is great hesitation in assigning a date, though the greater number hold to the fifteenth century B.C. Their representations with regard to Moses are so devoid of definite historical data as to envelop his personality in great mystery.

The idea of a revelation expressly delivered to the Jewish people acquired a more definite form in the Middle Ages; and from the Reformation the theory was promulgated, amongst those to whom the idea was not repugnant, that to a small portion of humanity only—the elect—had been consigned the task of disseminating the knowledge of religious truth in the world. The study of the Scriptures spread to all classes where it was not forbidden to the laity, and from that time millions of human beings knew no other literature.

Assured that the Old Testament contained the inspired words, Jews and Christians alike read it with feelings of reverence which naturally excluded all idea of captious criticism. But the spirit of biblical criticism which animated the reformers was never afterwards extinguished, and attentive readers discovered variations in the construction of the Pentateuch which at that time were inexplicable. The fact that the Bible contained many narratives which could not always be reconciled the one with the other was known long before the period of which we are speaking. St Jerome, when feeling the want of

more accurate Greek and Latin translations than those in use in his time, undertook to make one, and wrote thus to a friend of his, a priest: "Re-read the books of the Old and New Testaments, and you will find so many contradictions in the numbers referring to the years, and to the kings of Judah and Israel, that it would require a man of leisure rather than a student to enter thoroughly into the matter.[1]

Side by side with this historical reconstruction which is now carried on, there is a work of examination being pursued. It is asked by what means did the Jewish people become so strong, so compact, whilst in the midst of strange nations, and in spite of all vicissitudes. It is also asked what was the earliest history of the Hebrews, and whether it is due to the supernatural element that the tribes assembled at the base of Mount Sinai were enabled to become an united people; and, finally, these keen questioners desire to know the stages by which the conception of the Deity entered the Semitic mind.

The scholars who give themselves to these enquiries, generally eliminate the question of popular orthodoxy from the subject, since they consider that when theoretical theology finds its way amongst such workers it does not assist research; it confuses their point of view; they look upon the whole race as becoming prophets, and the prophets become apostles, and thus, out of proportion. The work advances slowly; each critic puts forth his own special lucubrations concerning the biblical settings which

[1] We find from a letter of St Jerome's to Paula that he was in the habit of advising his disciples to read the Scriptures, which he so reverenced, in the following order. He began by the Psalms, then took the books of Solomon, then he would come to Job. After going through this course of Old Testament history he would come to the Gospels and then to the Acts and the Epistles. After this preparation he would turn to the Prophets, who had foretold all that the Gospels related, and ended by allowing his disciples to read the historical Books of the Old Testament, which might, he thought, without such previous training, trouble and perplex them.—TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

all are naturally anxious to retain; contentions are rife on the subject of the Hebrew writers; their lack of Christianity, and their philosophy are both made matters for discussion, and disputes between the commentators did not cease.

Amongst those who are passive witnesses of the scientific investigations, there are many who, without closely following this modern exegesis, are sufficiently enlightened to recognise its aim and its use, and they exclaim with a satisfaction mixed with astonishment, "Whatever may be said one fact remains certain, our holy Scriptures speak of God as God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, as He most truly is, therefore the Old Testament, the product of the Semitic mind, is free from the taint which is perceptible in ancient Aryan literature, that of mythology."

Let us seek the reason of this immunity accorded to the sacred books of the Hebrews, let us seek it *in* the language, not *apart* from it, as some do when looking for the origin of thought.

The Various Names of God

According to the historians who have made a study of the ancient religions, each name given to or descriptive of a deity corresponded to a special conception formed by the people. This has been a generally received principle, and it serves as a clue to guide us in our study of primitive creeds.

The Semitic languages, like the Aryan, possessed a number of names of the Deity in common, all expressive of certain general qualities of the Deity, but all raised by one or other of the Semitic tribes to be the names of God, or of that idea which the first breath, the first sight of the world, the feeling of absolute dependence on a power beyond ourselves, had for ever impressed and implanted in the human mind. These names were all either honorific

titles, or represented some moral qualities. El and El-Schadai—Strong, Powerful; Bel or Baal—Lord; Adon or Adonai—my Lord, Master; Melk or Moloch—King; Eliun—the Highest God. Such names as these, so clear and easily understood, did not readily lend themselves to mythological contagion, and they were adopted by Christian phraseology because they contained nothing but what might be rightly ascribed to God.

I could have wished to pass over the name Eloha, which eventually became Elohim, in silence, as its history is a long one, but I shall say a few words about it, as it is one of the most primitive names, and indicates to us what the Semites understood by divine. The name Elohim, applied to an unknown, invisible power, one not grasped by the senses, was the expression of all that was superior and beyond what was seen and known on the earth. At the same time the name was used not exclusively for the Deity, but for others whose attributes, whether physical or moral, demanded a superlative appellative . . . there were thus several Elohims of varying natures, the Semitic termination in *im* turning Eloha into a plural, still always took a singular verb after it, and Elohim or the Elohim (pl.) were both used.

If a comparison be made between the Semitic and Aryan methods of treating the same subjects, the assertion seems amply justified that mythology has not ventured to effect an entrance into the thoughts of the Hebrew writers. If the subject Dawn be taken, it would remain with the Semitic authors a natural daily occurrence, but the Aryan writers would transform it into a personal agent taking the form of gracious, kindly mythical personages. An example presents itself in the book of Job.

Jehovah, the Creator of the universe, "answered Job out of the whirlwind," who had sought to learn the secrets of nature. Jehovah said to him:—

"Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days began, and caused the dayspring to know its place?

"Declare if thou knowest it all.

"Where is the way to the dwelling of light; and as for darkness, where is the place thereof?

"Doubtless thou knowest, for thou wast then born. And the number of thy days is great" (Job xxxviii. 12, 18, 19, 21).

This is dawn in biblical language and in nature; but who would recognise it under the figure of Daphne, Eos, or Ahana? All of whom have so exercised the brains of our mythologists.

But Jehovah drives still more deeply the point of His discourse into the conscience of Job.

"Who hath cleft a channel for the water flood, to cause it to rain on a land where no man is?

"Hath the rain a father?

"Or who hath begotten the drops of dew?

"Canst thou lift up thy voice to the clouds, that abundance of waters may cover thee?" (Job xxxviii. 25, 26, 28, 34).

The Aryans had also described the rain, and their thoughts on the subject coincided with those of the Semitic race, but they were clothed in the grotesque language generally associated with myths.

"The rain is represented in all the primitive mythologies of the Aryan race as the fruit of the embraces of Heaven and Earth."[1] This is an advance towards the poetical metaphor which Æschylus at a later date thus expressed: "The bright sky loves to fructify the earth; the earth on her part aspires to the heavenly marriage.

[1] From M. Renan's work on Semitic languages.

Rain falling from the loving sky impregnates the earth, and she produces for mortals her fruit."

It is necessary to possess a somewhat profound knowledge of the morphological characteristics of the Semitic and Aryan languages in order to note accurately the particulars to which I have drawn attention, and to understand the amount of influence they exercise on religious phraseology.

The Genius of Languages

Each linguistic family has special features, just as each race has its own physiognomy; the distinctive feature of the Semitic languages is that the significative elements destined to form appellatives, when once incorporated as roots in the body of a word, suffered no modification, and the original meaning could never be ignored. Thus all Semitic names for the dawn, the sun, the vault of heaven, the rain, and other natural phenomena, preserving their appellative character, could not be used for any other object; thus they could never express an abstract idea, such as that of the Deity. The method followed with regard to the arrangement of words in the greater number of Semitic dictionaries, which are generally arranged according to their roots, attest the truth of this fact. When we wish to find the meaning of a word in Hebrew or Arabic, we first seek for its root, and then look in the dictionary for that root and its derivatives. In similar languages no ambiguity is possible; nothing lends itself to myths.

In the Aryan languages, on the contrary, such an arrangement would have been extremely inconvenient; here the roots were apt to become so completely absorbed by the derivative elements, whether prefixes or suffixes, that often substantives ceased almost immediately to be appellative, and were changed into mere names or proper

names; this peculiarity of the language enabled the Hindoos to form such words as Dyaus, Aditi, Varuna, Indra, which at first designate various aspects of nature, and afterwards were applied to different aspects of divinities. The preceding pages have afforded us many examples, and I hope that the comparison I have drawn between the two representations of the same object will suffice to explain why it is that we possess a Grecian and Hindoo mythology, but that there was no Hebrew mythology.

METAPHOR.

But, on the other hand, the Old Testament is full of metaphor—these pearls of discourse; these expressions so light and effective in the mouths of poets as they skim over the surface of the subject in hand, but which we make so ponderous and ungraceful with our literal interpretations. When David speaks of God as a rock, a fortress, a buckler, we have no difficulty in understanding his meaning, although we might express ourselves differently, and probably speak of the ever-present help of God. Where we allude to a temptation from within or from without, it was more natural for the ancients to speak of a tempter, whether in a human or animal form. What with us is a heavenly message or a godsend was to them a winged messenger.

What is really meant is perhaps the same, and the fault is ours, not theirs, if we persist in understanding their words in their outward and material aspect only; and forget that before language had sanctioned a distinction between the concrete and the abstract, the intention of the speakers comprehended both the concrete and the abstract, both the material and the spiritual, in a manner which has become quite strange to us.[1] I

[1] *Introduction to the Science of Religion*, pp. 31, 32.

believe it can be proved that more than half the difficulties in the history of religion owe their origin to this constant misinterpretation of ancient language by modern language, of ancient thought by modern thought, particularly whenever the word has become more sacred than the spirit.

The Later Name for God amongst the Hebrews

Each divine name mentioned hitherto represented a quality or an attribute; we now come to one of comparatively more recent date, which contains neither attribute nor similitude; it is mentioned for the first time in a conversation between God and Moses. God speaks from the burning bush, and tells Moses to bring the children of Israel out of Egypt. "And Moses said unto God: Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel and shall say unto them: 'The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you'; and they shall say to me: 'What is His name?' what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses: 'I Am that I Am.' And he said: 'Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you'" (Exod. iii. 14, 15).

God in speaking of Himself said: "I Am that I Am," or, "I Am"; but man in designating God used the word Jehovah. The etymology of this word was sought, and it was regarded by many, rightly or wrongly, as a derivative of the verb to be. Jehovah was thus—absolute existence, or the Being.

"And God spake unto Moses and said unto him: 'I am Jehovah; and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob as El Shaddai, but by my name Jehovah I was not known to them'" (Exodus vi. 2, 3).

Writers are now generally agreed that Jehovah should be pronounced Jahveh. Renan notices this striking fact. "The name of God which has conquered the world," he

says, "is unknown to all who are not Hebraists, and even they do not know how to pronounce it."

By a superstition which some writers trace back to a very remote period, the Israelites considered the name which God had used of Himself to be too sacred to be uttered by human lips; gradually its use was discontinued; and the name Lord was used in its place.

Although the names of God all indicated the one true God, they did not preserve the children of Israel from polytheism, since there was hardly a tribe that did not forget the original meaning of the titles used. If the Jews had remembered the meaning of the word El, they could not have worshipped Baal as distinct from El; but in the same way as the Greeks connected the worship of Apollos and Uranus with that of Zeus, so the Jews were ready at times to invoke the gods of their neighbours.

It is not that the earlier names of the Deity contained no second meaning as qualificative adjective; Force, for instance, could be symbolised, but the idea of absolute existence expressed by the words, "I Am," excluded all symbol and all likenesses.

The Jews did not profit by this preservative from error; on the contrary, with the advent in Israel of this new conception of the Deity, the partial eclipse which so often obscured their reason seems at times to have given place to one more complete. As soon as Moses had constituted them a nation, they appear to have looked upon God as a national God, ignoring His relationship with other peoples.

The salient point in the Old Testament is the relation of God with His people, an alliance or covenant between Jehovah and Israel of which the rainbow became the first type. Threatenings and promises enforced the keeping of the moral law, the good and evil things of this life; if Israel obeyed the Lord and kept His commandments, the fields would yield their crops, the trees their fruits, and peace would reign in the land; if they were disobedient, the

heaven would become brass, and famine and pestilence would decimate the people, and the rest would be led captive by foreign kings.

Although no definite assertion concerning the immortality of the soul may be found in the Old Testament, a belief in personal immortality is taken for granted in several passages, and mention is frequently made of an abode in which the spirits remain after their separation from the body, that is Sheol, in which joy and suffering are equally unknown. The picture drawn by David in some of the Psalms, of the abode of the departed is sad and desolate. Though the word is not meant for an individual grave, this idea may have been borrowed from it; the meaning is that of a vast space in the interior of the earth; the dead lie down and are together and at rest, but separated not only from man but also from God.

The Hebrews naturally mourned and compassionated their dead most sincerely. "Alas my father, alas my mother, my poor children." But why should we Aryans, whose language is not allied philologically with the Semitic, copy their phrases? Why should we Christians, who are not linked to them by dogma, allow ourselves to use the same hopeless expressions, instead of words instinct with life and hope?

On the Prophets (Nābhī)

The phenomenon of prophecy, one of the earlier developments of the human mind, has been found amongst all peoples, at one time or other of their history. Certain spontaneous psychical movements dominated men. The important rôle played by the oracles in the history of Greece, is well known; the Greeks classed both the priests who interpreted the auguries, and those persons who considered themselves inspired by the gods and claimed a

knowledge of hidden things, under the name of prophets, indifferently. In the third century B.C. the Jews of Alexandria, when writing the Septuagint, translated the Hebrew word *Nābhī* by prophet. As amongst Hebraists the word Nābhī does not necessarily imply the power of foretelling the future, whilst the word prophet conveys that meaning, it might have been well to employ both terms.

The original meaning of the word Nābhī seems to have been "agitated outbursts." These men seem to have passed through a phase of nervous exaltation before beginning their exhortations; when once they had started their outpourings they no longer had control over their spirit's impulse; and were often physically prostrated, showing signs of an overpowering compelling physical force, divinely irresistible.

These Nābhīs, who appeared on the occasion of any crisis, when the welfare of the public was at stake, were at the head of popular movements, giving them a right direction; they were the first to rise against the oppression of the ruling powers, and thousands of them perished in misery. Isaiah likens them to sentinels, or watchmen always on the alert, watching with eyes fixed on the horizon, charged with the duty of sounding the alarm on the approach of danger. "One calleth unto me out of Seir; Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" This same Isaiah compares the negligent prophets to "dumb dogs, that cannot bark, lying down, loving to slumber."

Their preaching must have been very powerful; Luther, in speaking of the prophecies of Isaiah, says, "Every word is a furnace."

Until now Jehovah had by the mouth of the Nābhīs addressed the people as a nation; the individual was not singled out. But imperceptibly a change took place; new indications presented themselves. Instead of the order,

"Slay, slay," milder accents were heard; it was as though heart spoke to heart: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings; with calves of a year old? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy" (Micah vi.).

The individual becomes more evident; like the rishis, Elijah sought the Lord; and he came to Mount Horeb: "And a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice," I imagine that Elijah said to himself: "That still small voice is for *me*."

There were in certain places assemblies of Nābhīs, and schools in which the young prophets were trained in rhetoric and in composing discourses; for though some improvised, others—amongst them probably Isaiah—previously wrote their messages. All used a rhythmical language akin to poetry; the teaching of music no doubt formed a part of their education, since we know that the sound of music helped to produce the ecstasy which resulted in prophesy.[1] The gift seems to have been to some extent contagious. Prophets were found in bands, prophesying, and followed by musicians.

During the eight centuries preceding our era, a succession of terrible calamities took place. The Nābhīs upheld the courage of the people by their immovable conviction that the Lord would send a leader, and deliverer of the people from their enemies. Through the whole of this time Israel, though often despairing and sometimes in revolt,

[1] 2 Kings iii. 15.

resisted doubt; an unknown phenomenon amongst the heathens of antiquity. That which strikes us as so inexplicable is that Judaism showed itself capable of such prodigies of devotion and self-sacrifice, though so little sustained by the bright glimpses of the future life.

The Elohim with whom the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were permitted to hold intercourse, appeared more accessible to the Israelites than the mighty Jehovah of whom they were forbidden to make an image. The more we contemplate the infinite grandeur of the majesty of God, of whom there is no similitude, whose name is "I Am," to whom, according to Fenelon, even the word spirit is inapplicable, and of whom, according to Descartes and Bossuet, nothing may be said but this, "The Being," the more it seems possible to fear, to reverence Him; but to love in those days seemed difficult—love was rarely seen.

I desired to know what the best and most profound thinkers could say on the ties uniting them with their Creator, those who had experienced the action of the Divine love in themselves. At the same time I determined to emphasise as little as possible the various forms these thoughts might wear, whether in philosophical systems or in religions which had been founded or organised in the visible Church.

Amongst the thinkers who have occupied themselves with these matters, I will mention one who, about two hundred years ago, was looked upon as a dangerous heretic. Since that time Baruch Spinoza has been anathematised as an atheist, and venerated as a saint; afterwards he was declared by certain philosophers to be no atheist, but was counted as a Pantheist. In our day he is known to be less of a Pantheist than was thought.

Shrinking from such epithets, which disturb my judgment, I will not enter into the question as to which approaches more nearly to the truth.

I spoke once after this manner to some friends of mine, in the presence of one whom I had not seen before.

"You are too diffident," he said to me, "I will give you a safeguard against obscurity of judgment. Read any system of philosophy you like, you will doubtless discover that error predominates in it; put it aside for the time being and read another, make the round of several systems. With each your first impression will probably be renewed. After that go over each in your mind, not in detail, but taking each in its entirety. You will find that you can point out a certain truth, *one* truth which will have occurred in all. Let this gradually expand in your mind without unduly forcing it; you will have forgotten the epithets used, and will find one dominant note which will enlighten your judgment."

The manner in which Spinoza interpreted the sacred writings of his race has perhaps not attracted sufficient attention. His most important work from this point of view has the somewhat repellant title of *Tractatus theologico-politicus*. It is diffuse and heavy, and its translators have not succeeded in rendering it more agreeable. It is very difficult to grasp in detail, as omissions and reservations abound.

The Views of Spinoza

When reading Spinoza it is necessary to bear in mind—which is not easy—that he is neither a heathen philosopher nor a Father of the Church nor a modern critic, but a learned Jew, living in the middle of the seventeenth century. I will try to reproduce his opinions in his own words, and endeavour to keep them uncontaminated, as far as possible, with the views of the end of the nineteenth century.

Spinoza asserts plainly that he receives the Bible as an inspired book; in this he perhaps differs from some of our

more recent exegetes who examine the Bible as any other literary work of history and morality.

Christians grow up in the truth that the Bible contains the Word of God, and they claim that their teaching has its basis in the Old Testament. But others have argued thus: What do these know of the history of the Hebrews? They do not understand the language of their writings, and they cannot say what caused those sublime teachers of the people, the prophets, to speak on such and such an occasion, in such and such a manner. Being ignorant on all these points it is possible that interpretations of the Old Testament may have led us into error.

The existence of what are now called the laws of nature being unknown in those far-off days, the Hebrews were unable to recognise secondary or mediate causes; the book of Job is an example of this. God intervenes personally on each occasion. Our attention is directed solely to two points: man who suffers, that is, who consents or is in revolt, and God who wills or wills not.

As everything without exception is placed in direct relationship with God in the Old Testament, all is said to emanate from God; the cedars of Lebanon are the cedars of God;[1] men of great stature, the giants, are called in Genesis sons of God; the knowledge of nature and of natural things which Solomon possessed is called the wisdom of God; the discretion of a judge and the gains of a merchant are the gifts of God; Assyria is the scourge of God, and the lightning His arrows. And Spinoza asks: why are the children of Israel called God's chosen people? Because the Lord, having delivered them out of Pharaoh's hands, led them into the land of Canaan, where they lived under the laws revealed to Moses, to which the surrounding nations were not subject. "I will be your God, and ye shall be My people," Jehovah had said by the mouth of Moses. This was the covenant

[1] Ezekiel xxxi. 8.

concluded on Mount Sinai between the Lord God and the Jewish nation. These laws, which were at the same time civil and religious, were included under the general term, the Law of the Lord, and the Book containing these precepts was called the Word of God.

According to an ancient tradition, God revealed to Noah seven precepts which corresponded to commandments given generally to all mankind without distinction of race; there was thus perhaps a revelation given at the beginning of time, even before the first and greatest of the prophets, Moses; and this revelation the patriarchs knew. The light which lightens every man born into the world impressed these first precepts on the human heart; to the Jewish race it seemed perhaps improbable that a divine law not promulgated by a human mouth nor delivered in the name of the God of Israel, could be imposed on man; as Moses was permitted to hear God's voice amongst the lightnings and thunders, the Israelites considered themselves on a higher level than the rest of humanity, and held in less esteem eternal verities which were the possession of all mankind. Moses told them that after his death God would raise up a prophet amongst them on condition that they should keep His Covenant and His Commandments to do them, and he warned them of the consequences of breaking these: "I testify against you this day that ye shall surely perish."

We find the second revelation in the books ascribed to Moses; written in our memory as distinctly as in the Bible; it has so entirely eclipsed the first that the greater number of us do not remember ever to have heard of the seven precepts of Noah.

After the death of Moses, prophets succeeded each other in Israel; all from the first to the last acknowledged that they received the revelation either by symbols or illustrations, or by the word; their eyes saw certain objects and their ears heard the explanation of what they

saw. Ezekiel, like Moses, saw God under the appearance of a flaming fire; Daniel saw Him as the "Ancient of Days, whose garment was white as snow"; the disciples of Christ saw the Spirit of God under the form of a dove; the Apostles as tongues of fire; and Saul, at the moment of his conversion, recognised it in a bright light, and these visions were always accompanied by words.

The prophets rise above the level of other men by the intensity of their faith, and by their vivid imagination; but imagination is mobile, and their ecstatic conditions were not permanent; how could they feel assured of being in direct communication with the Lord Himself? They were so lacking in assurance that they often required some palpable sign, thus did Abraham, Moses, Gideon and many others. Each time the sign was granted to them; a fire descending from heaven to consume the offering; a rod changed into a serpent; a healthy hand instantly covered with leprosy; a fleece of wool remaining dry on ground that was wet with dew, and other miraculous signs.

According to Spinoza the gift of prophecy is on a lower level than that of ordinary intellectual knowledge which requires no outward sign of confirmation.

The nature of the revelation depended also upon the temperament of each prophet, on his education and his own personal opinions; the Magi who studied astronomy and astrology, seeing a star in the east, at once went in search of the expected child. But on one point all were agreed, they all said with Moses: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might, and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." And they said with Isaiah: "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings, cease to do evil, learn to do well, relieve the oppressed."

Obedience

A striking feature of Spinoza's philosophical system was the basis of obedience upon which the whole edifice of a religious life rested; now obedience presupposes the existence of a law.

As the Israelites seemed incapable of appreciating the intrinsic excellence of the precepts delivered to them, Moses enforced their fulfilment, and spoke of God to them as a just and righteous law-giver who would reward those who kept the commandments and punish those who transgressed them. And when this law was given out, amongst thunders and lightnings, the children of Israel acknowledged it with acclaim—though not always fulfilling it—because they were the only people possessing it.

At last the time came when it was possible to say: "The appointed hour has come." The Jewish nation, for whose sake the Mosaic law had been revealed, was on the point of crumbling to pieces, when Christ appeared proclaiming the universal and divine law. Christ was no prophet in the ordinary acceptation of the word, since neither word nor vision revealed God's Will to Him, the truth was in Him in all its plenitude, His mind was identical with that of the Father, and Eternal Wisdom took the form of humanity.

Jewish as well as Christian theologians have equally contributed at times to obscure the sense of the Holy Scriptures; they have taught that man's reason is unsound and can with difficulty penetrate the mysteries of religion; and that the only way, therefore, was to accept the Bible as infallible in all its details. The faithful extended this doctrine of infallibility to every verbal peculiarity and failed to distinguish the eternal principles, always clearly and simply expressed by the prophets, from those vivid illustrations which enabled them to speak, without

hindrance, in terms most adapted for arousing the wonder and belief of the ordinary hearer, of matters *per se* inexpressible, as for instance of the Divine Nature. Spinoza especially blames the theologians for having introduced in their commentaries notions borrowed from Grecian philosophers, which they adapted to the Old and New Testament, clothing them in biblical language; this mixture of divine inspiration and subtle argument more and more disturbed pious souls who went to their Bibles for edification only.

To those capable of understanding them Christ revealed the secrets of the Kingdom of God; they were the higher truths of eternal life, the counsels of perfection; to the multitude He spoke in parables and gave them commandments which were to be obeyed that they might enter the kingdom of heaven. The Apostles spread abroad the teachings of Christ; they preached the love of God with that of our neighbour, not as sufficing in itself, but as a commandment spoken in the name of the Life and Passion of our Saviour. And then each one added to these great truths minor teachings, varying the subjects according as they addressed Jews or Gentiles; many different teachings were thus promulgated, giving rise in the early Church to misunderstandings, gradually leading to disputes and schisms; and after nineteen centuries of study of the subject we still have not arrived at perfect mutual understanding. Spinoza quotes in this connection a Dutch proverb: "Geen ketter; sonder letter." Without a text, no heresy.

When shall we learn that the revelation of God is not confined to a certain number of books, to a certain number of words? It must of necessity be inscribed elsewhere also, since words are patient of more than one interpretation, books go astray and are lost, paper becomes mildewed and is torn, stones are smashed even in the hands of a prophet.

Spinoza tells us that he read and re-read the Holy Scriptures with the greatest care before commenting on them, and he undertakes to demonstrate to the Christian governments the necessity of reforming the constitutions of the established churches by replacing a phantom Bible by the Bible understood in spirit and in truth.

The scientific portion of the task would not be complicated, since the commandments of God are few in number, in fact they may be reduced to one. "He that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him"; and as a proof that they seek Him they must practise justice and charity; these are the foundations of the faith, and they are so clear and so simple, that no commentary thereon is needed, nor are they affected by any of the verbal differences or inaccuracies.

The ecclesiastical authorities thus act sometimes contrary to the divine will when they declare those who are leading a good and virtuous life to be the enemies of God, simply because their opinions are not in exact conformity with the theological definitions put forth by the churches. The civil power ought to be able to judge of the belief of its citizens by the fruits they produce, if their works are good, it may be thought that in the eyes of God their belief is also correct, but personal theological opinions, though in conformity with the decrees permitted by the Church, would not prevail in God's sight over wrong doing. When governments act in accordance with these views, all is well—individuals, the nation, and the governments.

In order to believe that God's Word may be found elsewhere, it is necessary to believe that He exists. His existence cannot be known;[1] we can, however, obtain some knowledge of it by certain means of which we can

[1] "A God understood would be no God at all."—Dean Mansel, seventeenth century.

know the reality; they are so real that we cannot imagine any force that can invalidate them; these means or notions are the fundamental axioms inherent in the human mind, and are the bases of all knowledge; it is to these that we owe the power of being able to distinguish good from evil, and this faculty we may regard as the forerunner of the divine revelation. If we once admit the possibility of these first principles—these axioms—becoming obliterated, we should then admit a doubt of their intrinsic truth, which would attack and weaken their immediate conclusion, which is the existence of God; from that time we should possess no element of certainty. This is why it has been said that attacks against reason are more dangerous than attacks against the faith, because they destroy with one blow the sacred edifice and the foundation which bears it.

The Law

In a system where law is everything, how does Spinoza understand the action of Providence?

Men are accustomed to call that knowledge divine which surpasses the human understanding, and that event miraculous when the cause is unknown to them; and nothing better demonstrates to them the existence of God, His power and His providence, than those things which appear to them to change the order of nature. We sometimes show our ignorance by attributing things of which we are ignorant to a special interposition of providence. Those who think thus are not in a position to explain what they mean by the order of nature.

This manner of viewing things might well date from the time of the early Hebrews, who wished to prove to those nations who were not Semitic, and who worshipped visible objects, such as the heavenly bodies, that these were subordinate deities, subject to the will of the invisible

God, whose miracles on their behalf they related, since they were convinced that the whole of nature contributed to the well-being of the Hebrew people exclusively.

With God the understanding and the will are the same; to know and to will is a single act; to know an object as it is in itself, and to realise it effectively, is a necessity inherent in the Divine perfection; since all truths come inevitably from the Divine intellect, the universal laws of nature are the eternal decrees of God.

If any event takes place in nature not in accordance with these universal laws, then the mind of God has not conceived it; in other words, he who affirms that in a certain case God has acted contrarily to the laws of nature, affirms also that God has acted contrarily to His own Divine nature, which would prove the speaker's perversity. No event happens that is not by the will and eternal decrees of God, each event conforms to laws eternally necessary and absolutely true. To believe that this could be otherwise would be to admit that God made an imperfect nature, and established laws so incomplete that they required to be retouched each time that they failed to realise the divine plan, a strange conception, and for which there is no necessity. Those who seek and find their supreme happiness in the love of God, and in doing the greatest good, have no wish that nature should obey them; they desire to submit to nature, knowing indubitably, that God governs all things in accordance with general laws which are in agreement with universal life.

From this statement it will be seen that it is no longer a question of resignation—of passive submission; man responds in every part of his being to the supreme law which, as is the case with all men, leads them blindly, and, for the most part, unconsciously towards happiness; and causes, in a great nature, such as Spinoza's, an unceasing effort to maintain and to raise itself; the passage from excellence to perfection is always accompanied

by a feeling of joy, and sadness marks each backward step towards imperfection. The being—Spinoza's monad—thus typifies perfection, and good, and evil consists in the increase or diminution of the being. The natural love of man for life has been transformed by Spinoza into law; his maxim is well known: Every being tends to preserve its existence.

The Law in the Gospel

The Old and New Testaments are an exposition of a long discipline of obedience, this makes their power, and those who study them without preconceived ideas discover this.

Spinoza distinguishes between the spiritual needs of the majority of men and the minority, and between the religions which suit the one and the other. But all men, without exception, must acquire the religion demanded by all, that is practical religion, which consists in keeping those commandments given us in the sacred books. This obedience serves to weaken passions; in the same proportion as man attains this end, so a light, ever increasing in purity, illumines his intellect, and so much the more does he comprehend that true happiness is the result of virtue. Few men go beyond this, or—without any other guide than their reason—experience that intellectual love of God, inseparable from the true knowledge of God and man; this love, when entirely disinterested, yields a joy which is not the reward of virtue, since it is one with virtue itself.

The divine law was in the world, as St John said, before the coming of Moses or of Christ, but the world as a whole was ignorant of it; reason leads us to it, and reason tells us that it leads to the highest beatitude, and that those who follow it will not need to seek any other.

But there is one thing of which reason cannot tell us;

this—that the moral effect of this universal law, which is obeyed, not because it is true, necessary and perfect, but simply because Moses commanded the observance of it, by reason of the covenant made by God, and because Christ commands it in His own name, is the power of leading to this beatitude, which those obtain who strive after the spirit of Christ, perceiving in this law of God, absolute truth. This reason alone could not have taught us, it is not written in the human heart, this we learn in the Bible.

That obedience only to a truth should inevitably produce certain results can hardly be asserted with mathematical certainty, since mathematical results are the effects only of those things which can be deduced from the elements contained in them; but a moral certainty we can feel, and this was the privilege and portion of the prophets; and it was possible, as it was not contrary to reason.

Biographical Note

Spinoza belonged to a family of Portuguese Jews settled in Amsterdam. He led an exemplary life; he was poor and apparently content to be so, since he refused help from his friends, which he might have accepted with a clear conscience; what he obtained by polishing spectacle lenses seems to have satisfied him. He was advised to dedicate one of his books to Louis XIV., a munificent patron of literary men, but he did not do so.

Ethics—the work to which he owes his fame—in accordance with his express wish, only appeared after his death, and without the name of the author, because, he said, the truth should go forth under no man's name; he feared also to attach his to a new school of philosophy.

The Rabbis of Amsterdam had long sought to bring Spinoza into a more orthodox path than the one he trod;

his idea that the institution of prophets had been a source of weakness rather than of strength to the Hebrew people, threatened to develop into a formal heresy.

The appearance in 1656 of Spinoza's *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, raised a storm of indignation; it was the only work of importance which he published during his lifetime; it was followed by a sentence of excommunication, read at the gate of the synagogue, and was in these terms:—

"In the name of the Angels and by a decree of the Saints, we anathematise and exorcise Baruch Spinoza, in the presence of the Sacred Books and the six hundred and thirty precepts they contain. Cursed be he by day and night; may the fury of the Lord consume this man, and may all the maledictions written in the Book of the Law light on him; may the Lord destroy him from amongst the tribes of Israel; let no man go near him, nor speak to him, nor write to him, nor show him any compassion."

How eloquent men can be when they are angry! Spinoza left his native town on that day; he took refuge at the Hague, where he died in 1677, at forty-four years of age.

In reading the pages in which eminent critics have examined Spinoza's system, one seems to see not the man whose writings are known, but two different men, or rather perhaps several different men; I do not think even the philosopher would have recognised himself in these résumés.

As has been noticed, Spinoza is neither a true Jew nor, apparently, a Christian, since the negation of final causes is as foreign to the spirit of the Old Testament, as his joyous stoicism is to that of the New; some have remembered the words of Novalis: "Spinoza is inebriated with God." They added that with him the crown of the intellectual love of God was the transport of a soul carried out of itself, but that this transport must have

differed from the ecstasies in which so many of the saints of the Christian Church found the supreme delight of the religious life. But amongst Christians what is their conception of the highest beatitude? I see God in His heaven, but my neighbour, where is he? On the one side are the happy, on the other the faulty; we recognise ourselves in each, we see ourselves, we have fellowship with all; painters have so often represented this scene on theological lines, that it is familiar to us; is this really the beatitude we picture to ourselves?

The mental and moral condition of this philosopher lends itself little to analysis; he who has the most carefully studied his views, would be the most diffident in expounding them, having found so many obscure points in them. In any case it is well to remember this circumstance, Spinoza has now been dead more than two hundred years, and the discovery that before speaking it is advisable to know something of the meaning of the words used, dates from yesterday only. Spinoza in his *Tractatus theologico-politicus*, uses constantly the words prophecy, inspiration, revelation, faith, and theology, and the reader who has sacrificed his rest for several nights that he may know what he means by these five words, ends by acknowledging that his devotion has been in vain. Happily, no one knows better than our philosopher the meaning of the word obedience; this helps the reader; he only regrets that the critics have laid little stress on this crucial point.

Since no man's writings are capable of being clearly understood if he is isolated from those who have written on similar lines—beginning from Novalis (that poetic and charming writer whose true name was Hardenberg), points of comparison have been established between the Dutch philosopher (Spinoza), the ecstatic Saint Theresa and the enthusiastic Saint Francis d'Assisi. Let us now turn to the more sober genius of Aristotle and see if he will

succeed in throwing daylight on the obscure thought of Spinoza.

"Infinity attracts," this word of Aristotle would have sufficed, but the prince of critics gives a further explanation. "Man is face to face with a truth, and the light lighteth every one that cometh into the world; all who see see the same things, and all that man has seen is true. . . . God works in us not as a workman who tires himself, but as an all-powerful virtue which acts; He moves as an object of love." [1]

This opinion of Aristotle is shared by Plato, St Thomas Aquinas and St Augustine. A complete unanimity.

When I am sometimes struck by certain truths, dressed in all the brilliance which pure virtues possess, but feeling unable to form a rational whole of these virtues when they are not arranged in an orderly manner, I should often have yielded to discouragement, if I had not read in Bossuet's *Traité du libre arbitre* these words: "When we begin to reason, we must first consider this as indubitable, that we may know *with complete certainty* many things of which we do not understand their corollaries, nor all their results. The first rule of our logic is that we must not abandon truths which we have once known, whatever difficulties may present themselves when we are trying to deal with them; but that we must hold both ends of the chain firmly, although we may not be able to see the middle by which the two ends are linked.'

The Ideas of Plato

A philosopher said to me: "Since we can know nothing of the beyond, let us make a virtue of necessity, and learn exactly what there is on our side of the veil." The advice is excellent. Astronomy teaches us that perfect order reigns in the sphere studied by that science. The world

[1] *Metaphysics*, xii.

may be the result of certain chemical combinations which have met by chance; but if chance has introduced order in these chemical combinations, it might as easily derange them and replace them by disorder; yet the astronomers have not succeeded in discovering the least indication of disorder in their domain; that we know positively.

It is generally admitted that the world has had a beginning; is it reason or the absence of reason that we should expect to find at the origin of the world? Does it proceed so regularly in obedience to laws? Sages have said, "Laws govern matter, forces, movements, all things that *are*, but might not have been, just as the world is or exists, but might not have been."

Since Darwin wrote, much discussion has taken place with regard to the origin of species, no one has thought of asking whether the Greek philosophers had anything to say on the subject. If, for instance, it had been discovered that the law of certain sidereal phenomena compelled a circular or elliptical movement, or any other geometrical form, then this law, in itself, would be a geometrical idea; that could exist, although the phenomenon in which it was realised, might disappear with the world itself.

According to Kepler, geometry has given forms for all creation, and Kepler has also said that God governs all things in conformity with Himself; in that case geometry would be anterior to the world and co-eternal with God, and if these geometrical forms which are perfect have been thought out by a perfect intelligence, is it not the same with all the component parts of the vegetable and animal kingdoms? Would a horse, or whatever the ancestor of a horse may be, have been produced spontaneously by nature? Must there not have been a type of some kind, which was realised in all horses, multiplying and varying for every new species? And in the same manner also for all trees and plants. The first types of these things existed before man, that other part of nature, and before all that man

calls the good, the beautiful. Were not all these things thought and willed by a mind capable of thinking and willing?

Thus Plato reasons.

It is received in theology as in philosophy that all things have their ideal in God; matter itself has its conception and *raison d'être* in God; St Thomas Aquinas was able to say with no trace of pantheism, "God is eminently all things."

Episodial

Two English travellers, Gatchet and Hall, finding themselves once amongst the Klamaths, a tribe of Red Indians, asked them concerning their beliefs; these Indians worshipped a supreme being who made the world with its plants, animals and men, whom they called "The most Ancient," "The Ancient One on high." The travellers then asked how He had created the world, whether by means of tools or instruments; they replied, "By thinking and willing." This wonderful answer contains the germ of the thought which, on Greek soil, became the *Logos*, the act of thinking and speaking, the unique act which in the Creator means willing and producing. This answer is an echo, and by no means a feeble one, of the celebrated saying: "God is the Living One who is, in whom is the Idea of Good" (Timaeus). Plato affirms that the world and all that it contains has been made in the eternal pattern of the Idea of Good, and this Idea of Good is not separable from the Creator.

Again perfect unanimity, extending this time to the Red Indians.

It might be thought that an electric current ran round the world; certain psychical phenomena cannot otherwise be explained.

An Excursion into a Country little known

If there are proofs of the existence of God, they should be within reach of all the world, both the learned and the ignorant, since God is no more the God of a certain class of person than He is of a certain nation.

In some modern books on philosophy we see this phrase, "The influence of the Infinite on souls," though we may not pay much attention to it, we perhaps have the feeling that the infinite does not exercise much influence on us; but it does not allude to ourselves, it refers to our primitive ancestors, who sought to discover what there could be behind all they saw and heard; common sense, with its uncertain but powerful instincts directed primitive man towards an invisible magnet. This is not our common sense, that is, not as we should define it, self-evident principles, spontaneous judgments, which direct our acts; but common sense as Aristotle would understand the word; the faculty of feeling and perceiving, where all our sensations are united, because all our external senses converge thither; this common sense is so truly a sense, that it has its own central organ, which is what we call heart. But this influence of the invisible—another name for the infinite—had at first no connection with religion; it merely deposited a germ in the soul, without which no religious tendency could make itself felt; and under the impulse of this power—this divine sense which Aristotle calls the attraction of the desirable and the intelligible—the passing from the finite to the infinite—the most natural and the most necessary act of the moral life—is accomplished by a simple flight or upward movement of the human spirit.

Plato explains this mental phenomenon: "There is in the depth of our soul a point which is the root of the soul and which forms a connecting link between God and the soul; the soul apprehends because God has touched it."

Perceiving in itself and all around it traces of goodness, beauty, justice, love, and joy; feeling in itself and around it, life and its forces; it is only necessary for the soul to send its ideas beyond the limits of its own confined being, with its imperfect capabilities and joys, and it will approach God.

Kepler, when discovering the laws governing the planetary system, found geometry in the sky; since then, the learned have found mathematics in all the branches of physics. They have seen numbers and geometrical figures in light and colour, in sound and in music under its sensible form. Leibnitz, one of the world's greatest mathematicians, who discovered the infinitesimal calculus, saw that in this way one could pass from finite grandeur to mathematical laws and forms such as belong eternally to God—independent of all dimensions.

Between the spontaneous flight of the soul with spreading wings, going from finite facts to infinite, and the highest mathematics, which have existed for about two hundred years only, the analogy is complete; the learned demonstrations of the existence of God given by all true philosophers are results which correspond with those obtained by the ordinary methods used by all men. Thus the identity of the fundamental process of a reasonable life with that of the geometrical process, which both demonstrate the existence of God, is established. The metaphysical certainty of the first process equals the geometrical certainty of the second. For this reason Leibnitz could say, "There are geometry, metaphysics, harmony, and morality everywhere."

I have well said that the human Ego used science and philosophy, before the appearance of philosophers, to attest that the true path leading to God is that natural movement of the soul described by the Hindoo poets—during a time of great ignorance—in the Vedic hymns. This movement is the universal act of prayer.

For the philosopher, the proof of the existence of God may appear to rest on a syllogism; for the historian it rests on the complete evolution of the human mind.

Is it necessary still to ask how the idea of a supersensible principle penetrated into the human mind, and how it is diffused over the world? The reply to this question is in the Veda, where the hymns show methodically, under an apparent confusion, what we have been able to glean here and there from the mouth of sages of all times. This idea revealed itself to man at first in external nature; then man discovered it in his own personal and phenomenal self, the abridgment of humanity in its entirety with its living and its dead. "At last the consciousness of self arose from out the clouds of psychological mythology, and became the consciousness of the Infinite or the Divine within us. The individual self found itself again in the Divine Self. Socrates knew it, but he called it *Daimonion*, the indwelling God. The early Christian philosophers called it the *Holy Ghost*, a name which received many interpretations and misinterpretations in different schools of theology, but which ought to become again what it was meant for in the beginning, the spirit which unites all that is holy within man, with the Holy of Holies, or the Infinite."[1] This may be called natural religion, since it was revealed by nature, and the truth of this revelation is demonstrated mathematically.

All that I have just said has been epitomised in a few lines by a thinker of our century, Bordas-Desmoulins: "Without mathematics it would be impossible to penetrate to the depths of philosophy; without philosophy it would be impossible to arrive at the foundations of mathematics; without the two we could penetrate nothing."

Aristotle quotes these words of Anaxagoras, who lived one hundred and fifty years before him: "The man who

[1] *Physical Religion*, p. 4.

recognised in nature an intelligence which is the cause of the arrangement and order of the universe has alone kept his reason in the midst of the follies of his predecessors."

There has been no break in the continuity of the first impression experienced by man at the sight of lightning, and God whom each nation named after its own way, and Him whom the Athenians worshipped without knowing, whom the Apostle declared to them.

I will here repeat the words of Aristotle, which must never be effaced from our memories: "Man is face to face with the light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world." It was this that caused the same philosopher to use those other surprising words, so difficult to grasp when reading them for the first time in a book: "All who see see the same things, and all that a man has seen is true."

ANTHROPOMORPHISM

Man at the beginning, knowing of two kinds of agents only, both tangible, themselves and the beasts, conceived the idea that the phenomena of nature were set in motion by invisible agents of some kind, their imagination followed its natural bent in picturing these agents under one or the other of the two aspects familiar to them, and sometimes under the two united; since these unknown powers—for instance amongst the Egyptians—often assumed the shape of creatures half man and half fish, or bird, or quadruped. But with the progress of civilisation these representations of divinities were modified. Man having obtained glimpses of the difference between the phenomenal and the non-phenomenal, was led to suspect the existence of an author for the one and the other; and this author or agent was perceived by him anthropomorphically, that is to say, arrayed with a human personality, but endowed with all the qualities of goodness

and beauty which distinguish the highest and noblest of men. We know that anthropomorphism in the abstract is wrong, yet without it man could never have found the way of approach to this unknown author of all created things, and the desire to know him nearer was irresistible.

In one sense we are less advanced than our primitive ancestors. Attracted on the one hand by the occult properties of the magnet, and impelled by sensation, they advanced in all simplicity. At a later date they desired to have those things explained to them which they did not understand; men undertook this duty, greater distances grew up between them, and the sacred code was the result.

The Sacred Codes and the Codes of Laws

History teaches us that each sacred Code grew gradually, and in the same way as the Codes of Laws. A religion peculiar to each people existed, though vague and indefinite, before the written Code. If there had not been a growth of the law by means of decrees, pronounced at various times by the heads of the people, accumulating slowly, and accepted in the same degree by the people in general, there would have been no definite Codes of Laws, such as those of Solon and Draco and others. If there had not been a religious growth formulated in oracles and prayers, and in commandments promulgated at different times by the prophets, accumulating slowly, and accepted in the same degree by the people in general, there would have been no sacred writings, such as those of Moses, Confucius, Buddha, and others.

It sometimes happens that Codes of Laws become transformed into petrified fetishes, to which submission is blindly yielded, whilst their origin is forgotten, and the sense of what is just or unjust is lost in the question of what is written and thus legal; and some sacred books are treated

as fetishes, to which an implicit submission is exacted, whilst their origin is forgotten and the sense of what is true and divine is absorbed in the sole thought of what is written and therefore orthodox.

The sense of responsibility of the citizen with regard to the law of his country is in danger of becoming paralysed when that law is applied with such mechanical exactitude as to confuse the ideas of *law* and *equity*;[1] and the responsibility of the believer with regard to the religion of his country may run risks of becoming paralysed when that religion is framed in accordance with a ceremonial exactitude rather than with a human feeling for what is true or false. The mere possession of the sacred Scriptures may have become a substitute for the love of God; the effective influence of the Infinite became changed into a mere habit which drove away the spontaneous action of the soul. We distinguish with difficulty organised religions from religions as practised by each one, which was our primitive religion. There are rites that we love; rites which at first reflected God have imperceptibly taken the place of God who vivified our religious life. We possess dogmas, but lose perhaps our hold of the personal assurance of the existence of a Being whom Plato named "the Being apart," or "the self-existent Being." The results of this are serious, since dogmata, of themselves, do not always furnish sufficing arguments against atheism.

It may be asked for how many people is this Supreme Being anything more than a name encountered in a book? To a small number of individuals He was an intense reality at intervals during the course of ages, to saints of the Christian Church and some of the heathen philosophers. He may still be a reality for certain individualities which modern philosophies have not classified, as amongst pantheists or atheists, or minds full of inconsequent enthusiasm. This Being is also a reality for the erudite mind,

[1] Cf. *Summum jus est summa injuria.*

or the contemplative who make Him an object of study. But the greater number of men, even the civilised, the baptised, are content to pass by; they are satisfied with the reflection only.

Some might say that it is by means of our reason rather than of our heart that we are enabled to trace in God "the Being apart" or "self-existent Being," but Seneca says: "Reason is not only composed of evidence; its best part is obscure and hidden."

In our days this remark of Seneca's has been paraphrased and rendered more in detail, it has been said: "There are certain minds which are illumined, and there are others full of warmth; the warmth and the clarity at times separate, but never the warmth and the nobility; in the more noble minds there is more warmth."

If, as Spinoza thought, reason becomes less apt at raising itself to the knowledge of God, in proportion as imagination and enthusiasm—to which it gives rise—gain in strength, yet, on the other hand, the world in general would no doubt have benefited by the work of prophets which characterised the history of the Hebrew people; the greater number of intellectual men amongst the ancient philosophers would not have sought after the knowledge of God, when it was presented in a form too pure and too abstract to impress the multitude. The divine conception therefore descended and captivated them by a union of the divine and human; and it is because the Bible contains this universal element that the idea of a supernatural revelation has become deeply engraved in the human conscience, and has caused some to consider the Bible as the unique source of all revelation. For this reason the people of Israel, though less prone to action than many of whom history speaks, are, to those who think, the most important amongst the nations of antiquity, since they have proved, as none others have done, the power of the spiritual element in humanity.

It is displeasing to many persons to hear the term "Science of Religion" used. "How can a science be made," they say, "of what is a natural sentiment? We can believe without study." Why do they not add, "and without reflection?"

Certainly religion did not commence in this world by study; men first applied themselves to the natural sciences; they have hardly arrived, at the present time, at the social sciences; and in the opinion of certain theologians—Père Gratry, for instance—it was several centuries before the science of religion became known, but it may be a science without the religious sentiment suffering in any way. With this view before us, let us begin not to build but to bring together the materials; following the advice of the excommunicated philosopher of Amsterdam, let us look at the sacred writings of the people in order to form some idea of the different religions, which is much easier than to know what religion is.

Indifference and ignorance are so common that sometimes young men are found—even those about to take orders—who would be incapable of answering these questions: "What are the chief historical religions of our day? How many are there? Who are their founders? What are the titles of the sacred writings considered by these communities as authorities in matters of Faith?" We know that it is not of Faith to consider that the world was created in six days of ordinary length, but we do not know the constitution and names of the religions whence for thousands of years millions of human creatures have drawn their hope, their consolation, and their rules of conduct.

Eight supreme or "book" religions, as Max Müller calls them, are in possession of Sacred Writings; Brahmanism, which is the religion of the Veda, and the most ancient of the Aryan family, with Buddhism form the two religions of India; Zoroastrianism, or Magism, the Persian religion;

two religions in China, one the result of the philosophical teachings of Lao-tse; the other—which is more practical—of Confucius; Judaism and Christianity; and Mohammedanism, the religion of Arabia.[1]

With regard to the non-Christian religions, there is one with which we are little familiar; it seems to have an attraction for some people, probably because we imagine it to contain much occult knowledge, which stimulates us to search for its mysteries; this religion is Buddhism. With what complacency we discuss it in our drawing-rooms, without suspecting that we have erred from the first; we generalise on the religious opinions of millions of souls separated from us by half the globe, and by thousands of years, without remembering that these opinions have varied and continue to vary amongst numerous sects, just as the dialects of a language vary; and all the time the fundamental principles of the religion have escaped us.

I shall say a few words only as to Buddhism, and these will relate first to orthography; it is necessary to distinguish between the words Buddha and Budha, which are often confounded; they have nothing in common but their roots. Buddha with two *ds* is a participle of *budh* which means awakened, or enlightened with a special light; this name is given to those who have attained the highest degree of human wisdom; Budha with one *d* is simply a wise man; and when the Hindoos taught the

[1] This study of religions hardly gives sufficient prominence to Christianity; Max Müller says: "I make no secret that true Christianity, I mean the religion of Christ, seems to me to become more and more exalted the more we know and the more we appreciate the treasures of truth hidden in the despised religions of the world."—*Introduction to the Science of Religion*, p. 28.

"It may be said that my chief object has been to magnify Christianity, by showing that it is the fulfilment of all that the world has been hoping and striving for. In one sense that is true. But if I hold that Christianity has given the best and truest expression to what the old world had tried to express in various and less perfect ways, I have at least given the facts on which I rely."—*Anthropological Religion*, p. 388.

Greeks a knowledge of the planets, they gave this name to the planet Mercury.

The custom of immolating the widow on the funeral pile of her dead husband is naturally spoken of with astonishment and horror; for many centuries neither the Hindoos nor Europeans knew that it arose from a mistaken interpretation of some lines in the Veda.

At last a time arrived when the Brahmans, who were the religious nobility of the country and had the control of the Vedic religion, pretended that each word of the Veda had been supernaturally revealed; voices were now raised in protest against this affirmation; the Hindoo people, who submitted patiently to the yoke of political despotism, would not permit a monopoly of the teaching of eternal truths; and to shake the authority of the clergy it was quite sufficient for one man to step forth from amongst the multitude and assert that it was possible to obtain eternal happiness without the intervention of the Brahmanic priesthood, and without a blindfold faith in the books on which they had placed the seal of infallibility. Five hundred years before our present era this man appeared, the son of a king, of the warrior caste, not belonging to the Brahman class; he was Gautama Sâkya-Muni, known to the entire world afterwards as the Buddha. He claimed the right of giving instruction, and handed it on to others who were also enlightened. Two hundred years after his death, the famous king Asoka convened a great council in order to determine the various points of doctrine; and his edicts were engraved in the Sanscrit dialect then in use, on rocks in various parts of his kingdom.

If the teaching of Buddha awakened such an ardent sympathy amongst men, and was propagated with so much rapidity, it was owing to the fact that the Hindoo mind had been prepared to receive it by centuries of meditation.

In all probability it was not Buddha who coined the term Nirvâna; he may have found it ready made in the

Upanishads, where it meant originally not annihilation of the soul, or absorption, but a "blowing out, an extinction," then an extinction of passions, a final moral emancipation, and the union of the individual soul with eternal truth.

In ending this short appreciation of Buddhism, I will add that, even in our day, there are begging Brahmans, some living in communities, others dispersed in villages, who know the entire Rig-Veda by heart, as their ancestors did three thousand years ago; and although they had manuscripts and even printed texts they made no use of them.

Our knowledge of established religions has rendered one indubitable fact clear to us, that is the deterioration to which all are subject; none has remained what it was in its initial period; the most perfect suffers from contact with the world, in the same way as pure air undergoes a change when breathed by thousands of lungs.

Christ's teaching conquered alike the ignorant multitude and the most civilised portions of the world, because from the first He used words with which to express the most exalted truths, which could equally be understood by the young Jew, the Roman publican, and the Greek philosopher. Christianity broke down the barrier which divided nations; until that time everyone who did not speak Greek, was, to the Greek, a barbarian; to the Jew all the uncircumcised were strangers; the nascent Christianity drew white and black together; the idea of the whole human race forming one family had its birth at the word of Christ.

The narrowness of outlook disappeared for a time; it returned when efforts were made to confine the words of Christ within the narrow compass of a rigid formula; and thus it came to pass that the recently established doctrine soon ceased to fulfil its chief object, that of being a link of universal charity. Zealous disciples, whilst depreciating dissident religions, endeavoured to detach Christianity from

the uninterrupted chain of the government of the world or divine Providence, thus forming an isolated branch in the history of the human family.

Each religion, like each language, has a past history, only we neglect to study the beginnings, because we lose sight of the fact that the founders of the great religions claim no exclusive right to the name of sole author.[1]

Justin Martyr, in his *Apology* (A.D. 139), has this memorable passage (*Apol.* i. 46): "One article of our faith, then, is that Christ is the true Logos (or universal Reason) of which mankind are all partakers; and therefore those who live according to the Logos are Christians, notwithstanding they may pass with you for atheists; such among the Greeks were Socrates and Heracleitus, and the like; and such among the barbarians were Abraham, and Ananias, and Azarias, and Misael, and Elias, and many others; . . . and those who have lived in former times in defiance of the Logos or Reason were evil, and enemies of Christ, and murderers of such as lived according to the Logos; but they who have made or make the Logos or Reason the rule of their actions are Christians, and men without fear and trembling."[2]

St Augustine, speaking in the same strain, says: "What is now called the Christian religion, has existed among the ancients, and was not absent from the beginning of the human race, until Christ came in the flesh, from which time the true religion, which existed already, began to be called Christian" (*Retr.* i. 13).

We know by heart certain passages of the New Testament, but it is rather the sound than the meaning which is impressed on our memory; when we come upon similar remarks made some centuries before the Gospel was

[1] On this subject Max Müller says: "The ancient Fathers of the Church spoke on these subjects with greater freedom than we venture to use in these days."—*Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., Pref. xxix.

[2] *Chips from a German Workshop*, vol. i., Pref. xxix.

preached, they strike us forcibly; and it is as though we heard them for the first time. Jesus Christ declared before the assembled multitude: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God." These words were said to a ruler of the Jews named Nicodemus, who had come to Jesus by night, and he asked Him to explain how these things could be. Jesus answered: "Art thou the teacher of Israel, and understandest not these things?"

No, the teacher of Israel understood not these things, but the heathen Aristotle knew them; he had said in speaking of the contemplation of God: "Such a life is superior to the ordinary life of man; it is not as man that man lives this life, but by merit of a divine principle living in him."

Jesus said unto the woman of Samaria who was sitting at the foot of Mount Gerizim, a place sacred to those of her belief: "Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when neither in this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father; . . . but the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth." Although nearly two thousand years have passed men do not yet believe it.

Origen, one of the early Fathers of the Church, wrote: "If we wish at last to emerge from infancy, we must translate the temporal and visible Gospel into that which is eternal and intelligible." This same Father was condemned by a council for certain opinions deemed erroneous, amongst others those on the plurality of worlds, which he said he found in the Gospel, this opinion might well be true. St Jerome mentions the anathema used: "Like Satan, of whom he is the son, Origen fell as lightning from heaven." As a piece of eloquence it rivals the condemnation of the philosopher of Amsterdam.

Many legends were disseminated amongst the people, they were the natural productions of the moral atmosphere

of Europe at the time when the first germs of Christianity sank into a soil strewn with the debris of ancient mythology. What happened then will always happen when the multitudes learn the language of their rulers without at the same time assimilating their ideas.

It is related that in the thirteenth century, in a little town of Italy, a Brother Thomas asked Brother Bonaventure whence came the power and unction of which all his sermons were so full. Bonaventure pointed to a crucifix hanging on the wall of his cell: "He it is who dictates to me all that I say." This reply was reported to the people, who believed it literally, and the inhabitants of the town were convinced that Brother Bonaventure possessed a crucifix that spoke. The painters adopted the subject, amongst the first were those of Spain. Thus a symbol took the place of a sacred truth.

The Church has often been accused of tolerating like superstitions; yet she endeavours to stop their propagation; but the task of trying to restore each stone to its place is one of great delicacy, lest the foundations should be shaken upon which the spiritual life of long centuries has been built. Miracles are a prominent feature in all religions; nevertheless, when the disciples of Buddha asked their master to enable them to perform them, he replied: "I will teach you to perform the greatest moral miracle. Hide your good deeds, and confess before the world the sins you have committed" (*Phy. Religion*, p. 339).

Mohammed, in the Koran, expresses the strongest contempt for miracles, in the usual sense of that word, and he appeals to the true miracles, the great works of Allah in nature: "I cannot show you," he said to his disciples, "signs more wonderful than what you see every day and every night." But the orthodox Mohammedans delight in relating the miracles wrought by Mohammed, and which have made him the marvel of Arabia.

Miracles seem to serve the purpose of impressing upon us that the religion is true in which name they are performed; it has also been observed that the same miracle is not generally performed twice, as the second time it appears natural; it is extraordinary the faculty man possesses of feeling no astonishment at those things which should awaken his most profound astonishment.

As critics we are now in a position to take note of the mental aberrations of the mythological period; we can understand that when the ancient peoples attributed a divine descent to their kings and heroes, it was the highest praise that one man could give to another; we know that the mythology as taught in the schools, was no more the religion of the Greeks and Romans than rust is iron. Yet it is this homage which has perhaps obscured our minds as we imagine absolutely human intercourse taking place between mortals and immortals. The action of metaphor overstepped the boundary of the fabulous ages; it invaded, unknown to us, the domain of the modern thinker, and even our religion was not sheltered from its attacks; we now use in our religious phraseology the words of *father* and *son*, without having first despoiled them of their material meaning; and we hardly realise that in this different sphere these words are a daring metaphor, upon which, of our own initiative, we could not have ventured. A vague idea that God is separated from us by space dominates us, so that the belief that there can be no barrier between the divine and human is often confounded with pantheism; yet without pantheism of this kind, which differs *in toto* from the dogmatic pantheism, Christianity would not have made its appearance in the world. We invoke neither Jupiter nor Jehovah; God is for us the God whose name is found in all modern languages; but it is God around us, beyond us; in speaking of Him our thoughts follow Him to Heaven. When a man takes God to witness of his innocence, he

involuntarily lifts his hand to Heaven; in a time of disastrous drought, when the earth refuses its nourishment to man and beast, pious souls are invited to pray to God for the blessing of rain. Whilst the work of science has been specially directed to causes, religion is content, as in the past, to attribute each act to an agent; the influence of ancient ideas on our present thought is still in force, and our mind has to live as the oyster, under a cover which it has made for itself. But we must submit to evidence, and acknowledge that if we do not yet escape from the power of mythology, it is that we meet its language everywhere, even in our sacred writings.

Language has moulded our thoughts; when they tend towards God, we make a representation of Him as a person, we are not able to avoid such representations; we know that the sun does not rise each morning, but we cannot do otherwise than see it rise; we know that the sky is not blue, but to us it wears no other appearance.

We hear it repeated that an impersonal God is no God; but it is forgotten that personification implies limitations, since it cannot be conceived but from a human point of view, and thus with limits. When Spinoza denied a Divine personality, his opposers believed him to be denying God; the philosophers of the seventeenth century, including Catholic theologians, did not define the personality of God.[1] Descartes and Fenelon's definition is "The Infinitely perfect Being, without restrictions, the Being, to which nothing can be added." In regarding God's personality as we do that of a human being, we might logically say with Massillon: "God, in His anger, hears unwise prayers, in order to punish those who use them"; you would also be logical if you thought with that mother that God had taken away her child because she had loved it too well.

[1] In the seventh century the Personality was clearly set forth in the Athanasian Creed.

In tracing the progress of ideas concerning God throughout the course of ages, it would be a sorry task to gather together the characteristics chosen by Christian writers as those which mark the supreme Being; these traits would furnish a whole Pantheon of mythological divinities.

All philosophers and all truly philosophical theologians have held that God is impersonal Reason; Bossuet called Him "La Raison-Dieu." This Light that lighteth every one that cometh into the world is the source of a principle of certitude; Aristotle, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas thus understood it when they said that mind cannot be mistaken.

If we would make an approximate conception of God we must scrupulously follow the advice of St Thomas Aquinas, "Eliminate, eliminate," then only shall we understand the meaning of the sages who said that negation is fuller than affirmation.

Thousands of years before St Thomas Aquinas, the Hindoos practised his method; for it was the inadequacy of the names used to express the indefinable attributes of divinity that led them always to search for new ones, until at last, all the phenomena of nature having been examined and rejected, the Hindoos in despair cried, "It is impossible to seize that which we seek; it is not this, nor that, nor anything for which we have a name." At last they came to the conclusion that there was no name worthy of God in the language of humanity, and that all that could be said was, "No, no."

It is necessary, however, to use names as soon as we possess the ideas. All those which have contributed to the education of humanity have been the production of an impersonal work, the result of a long meditation by the human mind. It has been said that the idea and name of "the Being" for God, originated in the mind of Moses; perhaps this prophet put the last touch. "I Am that I Am" was the name used by him for the Eternal. The

Hebrews employed another method when speaking of God, they used the word Il or El. In Hebrew it occurs both in its general sense of strong or hero, and as a name of God. Something equivalent is found in the Zend-Avesta; "Looking around him, Il (Ahuramazda, the Zend name for Ormazd) sees nothing but himself; and Il said, 'I Am,' and his name became 'I Am.'"

But man at times yearns for a closer union with God than is expressed by the name "Being." When troubled and in pain he says, "My Father!" and he remembers the names which he lisped as a child, and all come crowding to his lips; and He who is above all hears and understands.

We must not separate religion from philosophy; the subjects touching on religion have always been those which have given birth to philosophy; even if religion existed only on sentiment, as some people maintain, it would be for philosophy to determine if this sentiment were an illusion, or if it had a rational base; to separate them is to lessen both.

CHAPTER XII

OF WORDS

"Nomina si nescis, perit et cognitio rerum."—LINNÉ.

IF language is the true autobiography of the human mind, our present language may also be called a perfect photograph of our mind in its present state of fog. Whether ignorant or learned we still talk and discuss, and we seldom arrive at an understanding of the subject, owing to our want of knowledge of the precise meaning of the terms. The most advanced sciences are those about whose terms we no longer dispute, mathematics, for instance. When we are quite convinced of the identity of thought and speech, we shall introduce into our ideas, and consequently into all our discourses, whether familiar or philosophical, a clearness impossible to obtain in any other manner.

It would be a great help to know the etymology of words, but that would not suffice. "L'étymologie," said Voltaire, "est une science où les voyelles ne font rien, et les consonnes fort peu de choses." This sally bears on its face the date of the century of which this could be said in all truth. At the time of Voltaire the science of etymology was confined to ascribing the derivation of a word to another word to which it bore a close resemblance in sound; and the clever writer was not the only one to rally the few learned men who considered it possible to trace words to a source which one can hardly suspect of being related to them. If Voltaire had known that his sarcasm was nothing more than a simple scientific truth, he would perhaps have found less pleasure in expressing

it. The science of etymology—a growth of our day—has discovered that words, which in appearance have nothing in common, neither sound nor meaning, yet have a common origin.

That would be a curious chapter of the history of thought, in which were demonstrated the errors that had been introduced and embedded in our minds by the use of certain words, which in the course of time gradually developed a meaning the exact opposite of that which they had at the first.

For instance, matter is generally represented as something tangible, that is to say, all are agreed in finding it devoid of mind, and it is a sign of condemnation to say of a century it is materialistic. Yet we who daily touch tangible objects, such as stone, metal, wood, never succeed in putting our hands on matter as such; we should not know where to find it. Does this arise from the fact that matter is not tangible? The Latin word *materia* had originally the meaning of the wood of a tree, then of wood or timber for building. This meaning was generalised so as to include solid bodies capable of taking various shapes. When idols were fashioned a distinction was made between the wood and the shape which emerged; and afterwards, when sculptors carved statues of marble or of metal, the marble and metal again received the name of matter or material; and when it was asked of what all tangible objects were made, even the world on which we live, the answer was that all were made of matter whilst they differ in form. In this way have we become possessed of our word matter, to which nothing tangible quite corresponds; and no doubt, owing to its complexity of meaning, it has not ceased to exercise the minds of learned men.

If philosophers have not been able to explain accurately the meaning of matter, physicists have not been more successful, since what we call matter does not come under

our senses. The word might have escaped this ill fate had it always been used only by philosophers "who try only to use words that have been clearly defined, but names are used by the wise and the foolish, and the foolish, as we know, are in such an immense majority that the wonder is that words have any definite sense left at all."[1]

Max Müller says: "I am quite willing to admit that matter may be called the objective cause of all that we perceive. For the very reason, however, that it is a *cause*, matter can never fall under the cognisance of our senses. All that we can predicate of matter is that it causes our sensations, that it exists in space and time, that it is one, but appears under an endless variety of phenomenal forms, that it remains unchanged in the change of outward appearances."[2]

The history of the word matter teaches us then that speech, whose sole duty it is to introduce light into our minds, admits error also as long as we are ignorant of the original meaning of words: matter, whilst it was the solid wood of a tree and wood for building, became for those who had coined the word a fit object for perception and conception; later, others, differently constituted, saw in it a word "which contains to every man exactly what he has found in it or added to it."[3]

There are many words whose transformations we are able to follow from one language to another, but, on the other hand, there are others whose history it is not possible to know with exactness, owing to the many revolutions, the many breaks and pauses which here and there have destroyed and scattered the links; but the science of language progresses, and those who study it look forward to the day when its foundations will be placed on philosophical bases.

Many of the false ideas we have conceived of words are

[1] *Science of Thought*, p. 568. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 569. [3] *Ibid.*, p. 570.

no doubt owing to the translations we read of books. When we first begin the study of a new language the task appears a simple one, the dictionary supplies us with the equivalent words and the grammar with the correct forms; but the further we advance the less we are satisfied; the difficulties of finding expressions which content us increase; words are too abundant, or too scarce; our conceptions are invaded by ideas of complete disparity; and we seem to be entering an unknown land, because new effects of light and shade have lent a novel character to the country. A translation is therefore at best but an effort to bring together thoughts which were designed to remain always apart.

If in our modern languages certain words necessarily change their meaning during the course of three or four centuries, ancient languages are under the same necessity in an infinitely greater degree.

Many scholars have devoted their entire lives to the task of deciphering old documents, as it is impossible for literature of an age anterior to our present era by many centuries to preserve its original physiognomy two thousand years later. A translation of the hymns of the Veda, or of the Zend-Avesta, requires exactly the same process as the deciphering of the inscriptions in the time of Cyrus, Darius, and Xerxes. The only certain way is to compare every passage in which the same word occurs, and look for a meaning that is equally applicable to all. From the lack of this method Sanscrit and Zend texts have been rendered most incorrectly. It is precisely the Sacred Writings that have suffered the most from the efforts of interpreters. Those passages of the hymns which have no close connection with religious or philosophical doctrines are generally correctly rendered, but as each generation expects to find the ideas reflecting its own time in the words of the ancient seers, the most simple discourse—if it can in any way be construed to represent modern

thought—is tortured and twisted so as to coincide with preconceived ideas, however foreign to the mind of the writer.

It is the same with the Hebrew version of the Old Testament. At the time when the seventy Jews at Alexandria were occupied in translating the Scriptures into Greek, 250 B.C., although Hebrew could not be looked upon as a dead language, yet even the most learned amongst these elders did not understand the original of many of the expressions, and probably few of the translators undertook the task of explaining how far those to whom Moses' discourses were addressed, understood them.

If the Old Testament has lost amongst the Higher Critics some of its ancient glories, it has, on the other hand, acquired a historical value which theologians of former times had never contemplated. The knowledge of comparative philology having been used in deciphering the cuneiform inscriptions or hieroglyphics engraved on the ruined walls of the temples and palaces of Nineveh and Babylon, we possess information concerning the worship of the Phœnicians, the Carthaginians, and the Nomads of the Arabian peninsula. We no longer seek the help of the inscriptions in proving the truth of the biblical records; it is rather these which confirm the correctness of all that we learn from the inscriptions.

One more remark on the subject of our venerable and venerated Bible. I do not understand how it is that some people with literary tastes never open the Old Testament to satisfy them. Lack of habit perhaps. Some of the wits of the Renaissance looked down on the Old Testament; now the admirers of classic literature know better how to appreciate its literary beauties of many kinds of which it is full; some of our modern writers have been much commended for their perorations; the perorations of the chapters contained in the Bible are superb.

"I will give an instance how the peculiar character of a language may influence even religious expressions. A Mohawk (coming originally from North America) was questioned concerning his mother-tongue. It seems that in Mohawk it is impossible to say father, mother, child, nor the father, the mother, the child. We must always say, my father, thy mother, or his child. Once when I asked him to translate the Apostles' Creed for me, he translated "I believe in our God, our Father, and his Son" all right. But when he came to the Holy Ghost, he asked is it *their* or *his* Holy Ghost? I told him there was a difference of opinion on that point between two great divisions of the Christian Church, and he then shook his head and declared that he could not translate the Creed till that point had been settled."[1] This fact has an interest for linguists; what I am about to relate concerns all.

A lady wishing to practise a little philosophy with the means within her reach, wrote to me once: "I am perplexed; my heart tells me one thing, and my soul another." It required some moments of reflection to understand what my correspondent meant; the heart was, in her eyes, obviously, the seat of earthly affections; and the soul that of purely spiritual aspirations. This hazy manner of explanation might, at first sight, appear harmless, but on looking at it more closely, it is seen to be unfortunate, for this confusion between thoughts and words, meets one in many a book of so-called edification, where the reader seldom takes note of it, especially if he be hurried or careless; but one regrets to see good women waste daily half an hour in reading such indefinite nothings, thinking to accomplish thereby a religious duty; these persons, with intellectual culture would draw greater benefit to themselves in devoting their half hour to the perusal of books of a more sturdy tone.

[1] Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 171.

We believe ourselves to be in the possession of very clear notions concerning conscience; earnest men speak of it as an inward monitor; simple folk like ourselves call it the Voice of God; for the one and for the other conscience seems to be a guide on which they can rely, and the Greek poet Menander was not mistaken when he wrote the line "Conscience is a god to all mortals." But if we possessed within us a faculty to tell us what is our duty, how could Pascal have said that good and evil differ with a few degrees of latitude? It is a well-known fact that the conscience of a Mormon speaks another language to that of a non-Mormon. We say with truth that we are conscious of having done well or ill, but it does not follow that it is to our conscience that we owe the fact of knowing right from wrong; this consciousness is the result of instruction from without, which we accept when our own judgment and our own experience demonstrate its truth.

In subjects of general interest, the task of defining terms should consist in choosing amongst the various interpretations which have gradually become attached to certain words, not always that one which is most intimately or etymologically connected with the primary root, but that which would indicate an important practical difference. Yet by an unforeseen misfortune, the daily necessity comes before us of using words whose meaning has never been clearly defined, so that at no time has one meaning prevailed more than another; this is especially the case with words connected with religion, faith, and objects of belief, which each one understands after his own manner.

In our days the possibility of an agreement between religion and science is often debated; how can we enter on the discussion without being quite clear as to what religion is? According to some it is simply the feeling of love for God; according to others it is the expression of

our faith under the form of acts of worship, acts of charity, or perhaps the holding of certain dogmas.

The same holds good with that which we call faith, and which is often a feeling of confidence—not always the result of thought—in the faith of those surrounding us. Some give the name of faith to that enthusiasm which has sufficed to cause men joyfully to meet martyrdom; others apply it to the confidence with which the wise men followed the guiding of the star, when it indicated the road they should follow. Faith is only worthy of the name when it can be said to be a reasonable faith, and thus accounting for its existence. If we are not amongst the number of those who can give a reason for the faith that is in them, we must take care that credulity does not glide in before we are aware of its approach; it arises from a weakness of the mind and is compatible with a tranquillity that differs very widely from peace; and when once mistress of the situation, it increases, and occupies it. A wise Arab well said, "He who builds his house on human credulity builds on a rock."

"Abstract," this word which we can trace back to Aristotle, has an interesting history. Aristotle used it at first to characterise the creation of a work of art; the sculptor carves out of a block of marble the statue of a man or of a woman, rejecting the chips and dust which serve no purpose. Afterwards Aristotle applied this same word to an idea which an accurate thinker forms, giving it a suitable shape, and separating it from all accidental thoughts that may have surrounded it; that done, what remains is an abstract idea. Aristotle has so well explained the meaning of abstract, that if our logicians had simply spoken of *concrete* as that which is non-abstract, all the world would more readily have understood the meaning of the word—concrete.

We possess and employ a vast number of words, and we apparently increase them by endowing the same word

—from a want of clearness in our perceptions—with various meanings. The ancient Hindoos must have felt that an over-abundance of words is pernicious, and for this reason, no doubt, the Brahmans at a certain period of their literature, imposed on themselves the rule of expressing their thoughts in the fewest words possible. They succeeded in presenting each point of doctrine denuded of all but the barest outline of words; they are the authors of the aphorism, "A writer of the Sutras is happier in having economised a portion of a diphthong than from the birth of a son." The full force of this sentence becomes apparent when it is remembered that the Brahman who has no son to perform his funeral rites cannot hope to enter heaven. It would be difficult to express more forcibly a respect for words, and the great necessity there is for cultivating clearness of thought.

What I am about to say concerns a word to which I owe the direction of my views of life, and my resolution to undertake the study of the subjects forming my present work; this word is the name of a man.

When I was young I made the acquaintance of a very learned Jesuit Father who employed his time in researches on the ecclesiastical antiquities of the East. We once found ourselves in the company of certain persons who were surveying the most remarkable of all the scientific and philosophical works published in our day; Darwin, Pasteur, Helmholtz and Max Müller were named. When the reverend Father heard this last name, he exclaimed, with his accustomed impetuosity, "Oh! Max Müller, his works are absolutely magnificent."

Twenty years later the announcement of a new work of Max Müller reminded me of the Jesuit Father's exclamation; hitherto I had read nothing of this author's; I procured the book which had appeared recently; afterwards I read those that had preceded it. At the end

of some years I wrote to the reverend Father; the state of his health had obliged him to settle in a town in the south, and I had not seen him for some time. I thanked him for having drawn my attention to Max Müller's name. I received an immediate reply, the first lines of which I will quote. "Your thanks are unexpected. Max Müller seems to me an incomparable philosopher, but my admiration does not surpass his merit." A few weeks later the worthy Father died of consumption.

CHAPTER XIII

OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIONS

I HAD not decided beforehand on the number of my chapters; it seems that there will be thirteen. If these pages have readers to whom the number thirteen is distressing, I beg of them at once to dismiss this feeling by saying: "He who objects to sit down thirteen at table, acknowledges by this that he does not believe in a supreme intelligence, superior to his own, which governs the world."

Science, religion, reason, and faith, these four words form the circle in which all intellects move, now more than ever; on this all the world is agreed, but all the world does not know what the greatest thinkers have understood by these four words.

If we do not wish to deserve the title given to that collective being, "the man in the street," the best means of avoiding it is to acknowledge openly that there are many unexplained problems facing us, and that man exists in order to do his part in solving them. Humanity is not composed of individuals who have been poured forth from a horn of plenty, its destiny cannot therefore be to diffuse itself over the surface of the earth without the means of knowing why it is there.

An ancient Greek said once that the gods were ready to sell all kinds of good things to mortals but at a high price, at the cost of hard work. If then we can only acquire the promised good things by the aid of hard work, our thoughts carry us at once to science, and we

ask what can this science do, upon which we so pride ourselves in this century, to explain the motive of our existence ?

Physics

In proportion as physical science studies this universe, so it recognises more and more clearly that its most general phenomenon is vibration, a periodical movement, which propagates itself in waves succeeding each other at regular intervals.

We have all noticed the effect produced by drops of rain falling on water which the absence of wind leaves perfectly tranquil. Each drop forms a circle, but the causes of perturbation of an aqueous surface are infinite : the dip of an insect, the leap of a fish, all ceaselessly cause new circles, which follow each other, become wider, and finally lose themselves in each other under our eyes ; the water is apparently a prey to shivering fits ; this is a type of the vibrations whose percussions are felt by the whole world. We are all, body and soul, subject to the law of vibrations, each sense recognises its power by means of sensations whose various kinds are apprehended by physical science, by the calculation of the number of vibrations which, in a given time, affect differently each of our organs of sensation. Science records the number of vibrations which denote to our skin the exact degree of the external temperature, she counts the millions of vibrations which enable our eyes to see definite colours in the space of a second, and the thousands of vibrations which enable our ears to hear, in the same space of time, well defined sounds.

Thus physical science explains a general phenomenon which exerts its influence, indubitably, on all men since there have been men on earth.

Comparative Sciences

When Bordas-Desmoulins, one of the first of our learned thinkers to study comparative science, said: "Without mathematics we cannot plumb the depths of philosophy; without philosophy we cannot penetrate mathematics; without the two we can reach the foundation of nothing," did he see that this truth is so great as to be all embracing?

We see theologians walking steadily in the footsteps of those who study comparative science with conviction. Father Gratry contends that without it it is impossible to know God, man, and nature. Matter cannot be conceived without spirit, nor spirit apart from matter. Whilst a human being is in the embryonic stage, the soul, the principle of life, is occupied in forming the body, destined to cover it during its earthly existence. The moment arrives when this body is sufficiently prepared to appear in the light of day; it contains two nervous centres, the one supplying the vegetative life, the other the animal; they are distinct though not separated, and the soul still continues its work on the body, whether it sleeps or whether it wakes; but during sleep, whilst man's will is torpid, the soul supplies by rhythmic movements of the nerves, the requisite matter for the reparation of the losses sustained during the waking periods.

This intimate union of mind and matter has been rejected by certain great philosophers. Descartes, for instance, completely separated the immaterial substance possessed of the property of thinking from the material body. Apparently we are of his way of thinking since we always speak of our soul as of one thing and our body as of another; this is to make two truths out of one and the same truth. But it is better to look upon it as one truth as Aristotle did formerly. At a later date certain doctors of the Church became of the same opinion, and at

present Christian theologians, who are also thinkers, hold the same view.

A fresh science is now in process of development. It connects psychical phenomena, such as sensation, thought, and action, with that which can be weighed and measured. This science bears several more or less characteristic names; in order to keep to generalities I will call it the new psychology; it is taught in Germany, England, Paris, and Russia, and perhaps elsewhere. There is only one way of dealing rightly with so vast a science, it should be treated in its entirety; but as I am anxious only to make known some of its more recent discoveries, I will content myself by doing this briefly and with many omissions.

Kant had as his disciple the physiologist J. Müller, who applied the method of his master to the study of sensations; and Helmholtz was trained by J. Müller.

At one time, rather more than fifty years ago, the germs of life were considered to be an exception on the terrestrial globe; but Helmholtz discovered them even in rocky masses; and he proved to Liebig that putrefaction was not a simple chemical reaction, but was due to the action of a living organism. M. Pasteur was one of the first to profit by this lesson.

Each definite science has its own special sphere in which it is occupied only with itself; Helmholtz, a physician and musician, worked entirely in connection with his own science only; without reference to the conclusion that comparative science might draw from his labours, he gave himself up to the study of the rapidity of the transmission of nervous impressions, and dogmatically laid down his thesis in his book *The Physiological Theory of Music*, which is perhaps the most important of his works; at least it is the one of which I have made the most use.

In nature we never hear simple sounds; nothing but a fusion of noises reaches us. Helmholtz, however, succeeded in distinguishing a fundamental sound in a mass of others; but it is quickly amalgamated with two or three other sounds which are higher and feebler than itself, as distant echoes. Helmholtz became convinced that music is composed of single sounds accompanied by others of a decreasing intensity, and he demonstrated by calculation that the number of vibrations of these secondary sounds called harmonics are greater than those of the fundamental sounds; and the differences of the grouping of harmonic sounds determines the difference of timbre. In this way Helmholtz discovered the cause of musical timbre, and was able to explain the reason, hitherto unknown, of the sound of a flute differing from that of a hautbois, or of a woman's voice from that of a man's.

There are two marvellous things in music; timbre and rhythm.

By rhythm is understood the number of a group of corresponding vibrations recurring in a second. Rhythm may be defined as a recurring movement, composed of unequal parts; the beat of a pulse, in which each pulsation can be separately distinguished, will serve as an example.

Rhythm may be found everywhere, in poetry equally with music; and it is this which imparts its chief charm. The beauty of the rhythmic prose of the Hebrew Nābhī naturally attracted the multitude independently of the subject matter of their words; and the rhythmic language of Renan's translation of the book of Job enables us perfectly to grasp and appreciate the special charm incidental to rhythm.

Music is provocative of nervous effects, at times of great intensity; beneficent to the greater number of persons, but to others quite the reverse; in his infancy Mozart almost fainted on hearing the sound of the trumpet.

Professor Wundt—who in his works deals with the human soul and that of beasts—founded at Leipzig, in 1879, a laboratory with this inscription over the entrance, "Institute for Experimental Psychology." Wundt said: "The result of my researches does not accord with the dualism of Plato and Descartes; from experimental psychology the animism of Aristotle (who connects psychology and biology) alone is evolved, as the plausible metaphysical conclusion."

A wonderful man this Aristotle! Whether we wish to analyse those sensations which stir every fibre of our moral being, or to trace the etymology of a word, or study the most modern of all our sciences, the first to present himself to our mental vision is the sage of Stageira.

The first notes of an air by Mozart or of a sonata of Beethoven could never have been produced by them by chance, they were willed by a power which their composers considered outside themselves.

Inspiration—revelation—the same thing with all, in all time, and in every place, they differ but in degree. It is possible that a musical physician such as Helmholtz, added to a psychological physiologist as Wundt was, and the two grafted on to a philosopher such as Aristotle, might have been able to define, in a measure, the meaning of the words Inspiration and Revelation.

It is with a knowledge of causes that we are able to say: "The universal phenomenon of vibration is a fight for life, a fight between *being* and *not being*.

Concerning Some Authors

We do not always occupy ourselves with science, and writers of a poetical temperament like to write on the more serious subjects, at the dictation of their heart and conscience only, especially when they speak to themselves alone, with no thought of others.

Renan, in his *History of the People of Israel*, writes: "In presence of the social problems of our days, and of the question: Has life a premeditated end and object? What is it? Is it for the good of humanity? Is it for the good of the individual?" The author replies: "The universe, whose last word we never learn, attains its end by an infinite variety of germs; if we are amongst those who deceive themselves and rebel against authority, that may not be attended by serious consequences . . . let us be quiet; if we miss the mark others will hit it; that which Jahvah wills, will come to pass."

Understand if you can.

Those who wish to adore, always find an object of adoration; Renan seeks his religion in the love of science and art; Comte thought to find it in a life, devoted to the happiness of humanity. Is it not of these, and of men similar to them, that the most intellectual and clearest sighted of judges, the mythological god Krishnu, spoke when he said, "All those who adore idols, adore me."

Everywhere we encounter God and His power; either He triumphs over man, or man vainly seeks to triumph over Him.

I have noticed that Renan's work, *La Vie de Jésus*, to which earnest-minded persons have a great objection, has been the means of consoling more than one sincere soul. Is it to be reckoned a good or an evil? Who shall take upon himself to say? Renan has certainly an attraction for certain readers, they do not succeed in finding out what he believes, but that is not to the point; generally he confines himself to troubling the water, it becomes muddy; in muddy waters fish are sometimes taken—we throw our lines—and—marvellous—each one draws out his favourite fish.

Père Gratry has nothing in common with Renan, except that both are poets. Plato having said that all but the

wicked have their eternal types in God, Gratry was authorised in the conclusion he drew in his *Logic* that "nothing in us, neither sentiment, nor imagination, nor prayer, can go too far; all is more beautiful than that of which we dream; all is higher than we can believe possible."

This language has displeased certain moralists, and they have not spared their censures on the theologian who used it. They have accused him of dreaming whilst dealing with religion, and they would have preferred that Gratry should occupy himself simply with literature. "Above all," they say, "how is it that Gratry has ventured to write five long chapters on the probable site of immortality, and to inquire where men will live when there is no longer death."

Why should we not be permitted to ask ourselves these questions, and to reply to them as we please? Are not theologians men like ourselves? Especially that theologian who said: "The time when religion will have acquired the characteristics of a science is yet far distant."

Religion and Religions

At an early period of our present era, various groups of men formed themselves into assemblies, "Churches," as they were called, all teaching religion, and each from his own point of view. The study of these instructions is full of important lessons. First is to be noticed this fact that the truths on which all were agreed weighed more heavily in the balance than those on which they disagreed. It is necessary to disentangle true religion in itself from its surroundings. There is one true religion, as there is one God, and one logic. The expressions which are current with us of natural religion and revealed religion should be

lacking in our conversation, since they cause us to believe that they denote two different religions.[1]

Opinions are sometimes attributed to the founders of organised religions which really belong only to their disciples, or even to theologians who live in an age much more recent than the historical birth of the religion; if free discussion followed, suppositions and doubts might often be dissipated, but in certain cases laws are imposed and rules laid down which are considered infallible and not open to discussion.

According to the early Christian Doctors, the Church is external and visible, together with that which is within and invisible; the title, "Soul of the Church," was given to the invisible union of men amongst themselves and with God; its dogma is, "All the righteous, none but the righteous can have their share in the soul of the Church; many are in the visible Church who do not belong to its soul; many are out of the visible Church who form a portion of the soul of the Church.[2]

In speaking thus the Fathers rested on an ancient tradition; it came to them from Plato, whose words I have already quoted: "There is in the soul a point, which is the root by which the Divinity suspends his creatures to Himself; and this central point is the truth which connects all men from one end of the world to the other." This explains the previous assertion of the Fathers.

But they did not content themselves with an assertion only; they imposed on reason the burden of explanation and the duty of knowing all. The first effort of our reason in natural sciences consists in examining facts and endeavouring to find the laws. If one eternal law did not

[1] There is *one* in the way in which St Paul speaks: "There is one body, and one spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."

[2] As Savonarola said: "Yes, from the Church militant, but not from the Church in Heaven," in answer to his excommunication.

rule over the whole of nature our labour would be in vain; if this same law did not govern our reason we should be incapable of finding those laws which govern the phenomena around us; and it is clear that there could consequently be no physical science. But it is not so apparent at first sight that if our reason were not governed by an eternal law, there could be no moral sciences either.

Many observations have been made by men of attentive and profound minds, but they have remained isolated for the most part. I will quote one or two that I have collected here and there; it is well to pass them in review, if only to assure one's self that they are true.

"It is a great mistake to suppose that those who have read many books know many things. Reading supplies the material for knowledge, but reflection alone causes it to take root and grow." Locke made this observation. I add to it that for reflection to bear fruit it must be joined to a good method. Père Gratry, who is a practical man, also enforces this in a chapter in his *Logic*, in which he lays great stress on the importance of reserving the morning hours for study and reflection. It is a fine paragraph, and worthy of being reproduced.

"In the book of the Apocalypse we read, 'And there was silence in heaven for the space of half an hour.' In the heaven of souls this is rare. According to St Augustine the Eternal Wisdom does not cease to speak to human creatures, and reason does not cease its activities in us. We have only to listen, and to listen we must keep silence. But amongst men, and especially amongst thinkers, who can keep still silence? The generality of men, especially those who study, have not a single half hour of silence in the day, men of learning either listen to those who speak, or are speaking themselves; and when they find themselves alone and silent, then they permit books to speak to them, and they devour long discourses, with rapid glances, in a few minutes."

Under these conditions all study requiring much reflection is impossible.

Attention, Abstraction, Contradiction, Speech—only a few persons appreciate the importance of these four words, and hardly any one doubts that they know the part played in their lives by the things which these words represent.

If we wish to know ourselves many subjects of all kinds must be studied simultaneously; religion and religions; the opinions of the ancients and of our contemporaries; men as they now are and as they were. Renan has well characterised primitive men in attributing to them "a special feeling for nature which enabled them, with wonderful delicacy and accuracy, of which we have no conception, to perceive the qualities which furnished names; and they saw innumerable things at once."

The Hindoos, who were writers many centuries before our present era, must have inherited from their primitive ancestors this special feeling for nature, or they would not have composed those verses in the 129th hymn: "Everything in the beginning was hidden in gloom—the germ which was covered by the husk was brought forth by the power of heat. On this germ rested love, the spring of the mind, yes, and the poets, in meditating thereon, discovered in their souls the tie between the things created and the things uncreated.—This spark, comes it from the earth, piercing all, penetrating into all, or comes it from heaven?"

These passages have something modern in them; they might have been written now when science seeks to fuse heaven and earth, which was not done formerly.

The cord does not cease to vibrate. The persistence of this phenomenon has different comments made on it. "It is the effect of heredity," says modern science; "it is a contemporaneous effect of the fall," says theology. Perhaps the one and the other make of the human race one unique being which continues through the ages.

It is as though time had no existence for humanity. Space also apparently does not count for much with the race. If the singular facts are true which we hear, two persons separated by a great distance have the same thoughts at the same instant; not the universal thought naturally inherent in the human mind, but entirely personal. Has sympathy—which is as essentially human as it is mysterious—a relationship with electricity, which is a distinctly physical phenomenon? On those who reject such a supposition should fall the burden of finding another.

Each of us sees a landscape according to our sight; to the short-sighted (and this is a normal condition) the landscape appears simple; trees here, there houses and streets, men walking; but with strong glasses, as is well known, it is possible to see many more things. Again, the short-sighted can distinguish only the colour, veins and serrated edge of a leaf, but if this were placed under a microscope they would see a surface of green glittering with light, and strewn with gold and diamonds.

If there are two ways of looking at a leaf, there are at least three of looking at life; it can be seen from its pleasant or painful side, this is to feel that we live only; then we can grasp it with regard to the duties it imposes on us. This is a right point of view, but it shows one side only; or we may consider it as science represents it, that is its moral, rational, and religious aspect combined.

The more we observe and the more we reflect on what we observe, so much the more do we exercise our faculty of understanding things; and according as this faculty approaches or withdraws from the normal type, so it will correspond either with the leaf seen by the naked eye or with it as seen under the microscope.

Opposition

There are two kinds of opposition. Very often we come upon a true thought in a book which shocks us because for the moment we do not recognise its truth. We also forget that all truths can be viewed at various angles; or we do not understand a truth because it is expressed in a novel way.

A manual treating of physics will best explain the reason of our false impression. When a ray of light is transmitted from one medium to another of different density, as from air to water, a change of direction is impressed on the ray, making the straight line appear broken; this change of direction is called *refraction*. Cardinal Newman made a very true observation on this subject. "If an idea is presented unexpectedly to us," he said, "clothed in words to which we are unaccustomed, it is sufficient to cause us to speak of it as erroneous; this illusion is only a simple effect of the *refraction of words*; that is to say, that in the mind of the writer of this truth which startles us, the idea followed a straight line, but in our mind it became broken."

The second kind of opposition is of a different nature. It is amusing to watch two individuals who are taking opposite sides in a heated discussion concerning some philosopher. "What I tell you is correct; A, who is a great scholar, says so." "Yes, but I also know a great scholar, B, and he says just the contrary."

There seems to be a charm in controversy which few persons can resist; they ignore what you say, and bluntly tell you that you are in the wrong.

Abstraction, Inattention

Not only is abstraction fatal to study, but it often plays us sorry tricks apart from our occupations. Sometimes a

bright idea comes into our mind, but touching only the surface; if by inattention or idleness we do not fix it firmly in our memory by clothing it in suitable words, it is a hundred to one that it is not irrevocably lost to us. It is not more possible to arrest its flight than to fasten a placard to the wall without nails or gum.

It is difficult to note with exactness the amount of inattention which so frequently accompanies the act of opening a serious book even with the fixed intention of reading it.

I once surprised myself in a flagrant act of inattention. I was staying with a friend, and took up Pascal's *Pensées*, which I had not read for some time. The edition was not the same as the one I had at home. Whilst turning over the leaves I said to myself occasionally, "How the style has changed—this is not clear—this observation is very shallow"; and so I went on, astonished at not being able to admire this celebrated work as I had formerly done. Suddenly I came upon this phrase, "Monsieur Pascal confond tout cela." What was my humiliation to discover that in this edition "les Pensées de Pascal" were followed by "les Pensées de Nicole." I had passed from the one to the other without noticing it, But what could have given rise to this impression of Nicole's? I turned back a few pages, and read: "A book has just appeared which is perhaps the most useful that could be placed in the hands of princes; it is a selection of the 'Pensées de Pascal.' I do not say that all are equally good . . . I find amongst them many well polished stones and fit to adorn a great building; but the remainder appeared to be mixed material, for which I can hardly suppose that M. Pascal could find a use. . . . There are even certain sentiments which hardly appear to be exact, and are like scattered thoughts thrown out at random, which are written only that they may afterwards be examined with more care and attention. Monsieur Pascal supposes that

ennui comes from that which we see in ourselves—from what we think of ourselves. That assertion is perhaps more subtle than solid. Thousands of persons experience ennui without thinking of themselves at all; they feel weariness not from what they think, but because they do not think enough. . . . M. Pascal confond tout cela." Upon my word, I felt consoled for my lapse into inattention; to this fault I owe my acquaintance with M. Nicole's acute remark: "Men do not feel weariness from what they think, but because they do not think enough."

Speech

When the members of the human family began to use the *clamor concomitans* which accompanied their occupations, as *clamor significans*, these simple materials formed the roots which indicated such and such acts, and produced verbal and nominatival bases composed of predicative and demonstrative elements. During the course of ages the first became conjugated and the second were declined. By means of adding the successive acts together, and retaining them united in the mind, or subtracting in several directions, our ancestors diversified the meaning of all the primitive roots; they formed collective and abstract nouns in their simplest form by combination. The process never varied; thus the thought progressed from the first root to the last concept. But the first word ever pronounced by a human creature was a true proposition, and our last literary chef-d'œuvre consists of a series of propositions.

Descartes' brief phrase "Cogito, ergo sum" may be better rendered and still more briefly by one word. The Greek word Logos, meaning word and thought combined, had originally, as I have already remarked, the two meanings of assembling and combining. "Cogito" = I think, which is the short for co-agito = I assemble. The

act of assembling presupposes that of separating, seeing that it is impossible to combine two or more things without at the same time separating them from other things. The child who is taught the first rules of arithmetic adds and subtracts, which can only be done by combining and separating. However little intelligence he may have, his task does not present great difficulties to him; and yet the most abstruse mathematical problem consists in adding and subtracting, and the most astounding calculations of Newton, and the most profound mathematical speculations of Kant, are but the results of addition and subtraction, of combining and separating.

In the course of time all that fills our dictionaries and our grammars was developed and achieved, and nothing remained for poets and philosophers to do but to add to and deduce from the materials which they had inherited or had themselves acquired as the result of their own efforts; and however powerful the imagination of poets may be, and however subtle the reasoning of philosophers, the materials which both use to form their monuments are exactly the same, and these are nothing but the words derived from roots and collected in dictionaries. Most decidedly Michael Angelo was something more than a mason or bricklayer, but yet the basilica of St Peter's is made only of stones and bricks and a little cement, which, when brought down to its final constituents, is nothing but pulverised stone. Most decidedly one of Shakespeare's plays is possessed of other qualities than a mere assemblage of the letters of the alphabet arranged in a certain order, but the materials of which the plays are formed were drawn from the inexhaustible supply of words accumulated during thousands of years, and which contain no single particle of gold or silver that is not found in the thousand roots of our language and the 121 concepts conceived in our minds.

Amongst the men who know how to think, many are

astonished that the so-called civilised portion of humanity should have advanced so little, there is nothing astonishing in this; let us consider the point, and remember that we are only now on the morrow of the day when we were still immature humanity, and in which the human character, with its germs of language and of thought, only began to be visible in us. The universe obeys the unchangeable law which we name Divine Providence; an irresistible law which compels matter to make certain predetermined movements, and the mind to tend towards perfection; man knows that he is morally free, and not necessarily subject to animal impulses.

Man's moral liberty being conceded, he uses it as he will; at times he seeks and finds opportunities for resisting the moral law; man, even the nominal Christian, stifles the spirit's higher voice and compels himself to listen to the lower voice of the flesh. Pascal said plainly: "According to the carnal Christian the Messiah has come to dispense us from the necessity of loving God by providing sacraments which act as charms apart from our co-operation," and our hatred and our injustice continue—under cover of a scrupulous observance of rites—to infect the world as well as ourselves. He spoke truly, and saw clearly, who first said: "Every being tends to preserve its existence." With regard to the man of whom Pascal speaks, this means to follow incessantly his evil practices. But, happily, there exist other men who feel that, besides oxygen and pleasure, they must also absorb science and true prosperity for their well-being.

We read in the book of Ecclesiasticus: "In every good work trust thine own soul" (Ecclesiasticus xxxii. 23). Yes, let us believe in our own soul, which is the true Ego, and it will bid us live. I am far from sharing Pascal's opinion, which is, that the Ego always merits contempt.

Science, after having noted and counted the exact number of vibrations of all kinds which from all parts

affect us, at a certain point ceases to have the power to calculate further, and recognises that beyond and above all vibrations there exists that which can neither be named nor counted. In my opinion that which is the best part of science is that it knows its limitations; with some people it is a well known experience that when they have once grasped the fact that their inability rightly to comprehend something they desire to know arises from an immutable decree, they become at once imbued with a profound quiescence, closely allied to certainty.

After which there is but one step left to human reason, to forsake that reason which is but temporary, and to lose oneself in that which has neither beginning nor end. This last step is an act of faith. Someone, who does not think sufficiently, calls this a leap in the dark, but for him who accomplishes it this darkness becomes transparent as crystal.

"Yes." these persons exclaim, "and such was Kant's last act." It would be more correct to say Kant ended as he began, by an act of reason, since he drew the logical conclusion of what he had learnt.

RÉSUMÉ

The evolution of the human race will not become clear to us unless we remember that a time existed when man was without language and without reason.

During this obscure period which we name the dawn of humanity, the material wants and their satisfaction, comprised the whole being of man, as it does that of the animal. With man commenced the line of individuals leading to the higher order of social life. It is possible that the feeling of being one of many was one of the first to awake in man, since it was owing to the support afforded him by his fellows that he obtained what he needed; he was also conscious of family ties, this emotion and senti-

ment was the cradle of all his best qualities; afterwards would come the attractions of race; this feeling might so dominate the individual as to cause him to forget that he was a separate entity; then by a concurrence of circumstances difficult to define, national feelings were developed from the salient features of the race, and national languages separated themselves from the central source. The knowledge of being a portion of humanity arrived at a much later period; he is still at this present time a part of a feeble few, and he can be summed up in the well-known sentence, of which the first words are, "Homo sum." If we consider the meaning of this classical quotation it is very striking.

We often mention the pre-historic times, but we seldom ask ourselves at what date history can have begun. With the first heap of stones piled up by the men of a certain tribe at the burial of a venerated chief, history commenced; this heap became the point at which the past touched the future, a visible link in the interminable chain of human thought.

At the origin of all this mental activity we find an inspiration—a poetical fiat. It was a historical moment —no other similar to it has ever been, before or since— when the first group of human creatures acclaimed with inarticulate cries their first cavern, or the first den dug by themselves. At a much later date when man, looking up at the vault of heaven—his curiosity aroused—wished to know what were the brilliant things he saw moving high above him, was he not impelled by the feeling of the presence of a Being hitherto unknown, and to whom he paid unconscious homage by giving Him a name? If the feeling had not made itself felt simultaneously with the awakened attention caused by the appearance of the sky, the electric spark would not have burst forth.

At a later date still to what can we attribute the union of pure thought and beating hearts but to the first definite

perception of the Divine breath, and the conception of an invisible yet longed for God, whose name descended from generation to generation down to ourselves? Aristotle, St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas, Kant, and Max Müller, have all described this ascension of the reason from the first thought which contained the germ of the idea, up to God Himself.

We thus arrive at a high level though starting from low ground; we should be higher still, but that we are retarded equally by lack of speech and of thought. As long as we fondly imagine that in possessing a word we are also masters of the thought attached to it, and that to penetrate to the heart of a thought is nothing but a linguistic exercise, or an intellectual gymnastic feat, we shall not use the sole method with which we are supplied, of growing morally, rationally, and religiously.

We form ideas of many things, but we know them only partially and disjointedly; sciences which we have learnt possess unity, since with grammar is connected synthesis, and with mathematics, algebra; (this word algebra is of Arab origin, "al djabroun," and means the reduction of dislocated members), is it possible that we—the creators of these sciences—should be destined to wander around and away from unity, and never attain it?

It is time to end this study; I suspect that I am not the only one of this opinion. It is possible that amongst my readers—if I have any—some may already have found means of shortening it for themselves; they will perhaps turn over the pages, read a few, and say, "How tedious the old pedant is," then shut the book and not open it again.

This would be a pity in my opinion; they should read a little more.

No philosophical work can be written without the words

perceive and *conceive* appearing very frequently in it. The Latin language possesses the word "capio," which means to seize something with the hand; only convincing facts can lead us to believe that these terms to *perceive* and to *conceive* are derived from *capio*; thus the word expressing the well-known physical movement of taking something with the hand was the origin of the two words *percept* and *concept*, without which no philosophical idea could take shape or be developed in us.

The space which separates the word *capio* from *percept* and *concept* includes neither more nor less than the entire evolution of man; that is, our own history.

That of which we think so little is in reality the indelible sign impressed once for all on man, that which alone distinguishes him from the animals, and which may yet help to form in man an excellence hitherto unknown to us; this distinguishing mark is thought and speech.

We are men—but has the type of the "genus homo" been realised? Is it impossible?

It has been undoubtedly proved that man is free in certain directions, and not in others; happily he is not free not to be a man.

THE END

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